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JEWISH STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITIES A BALANCE SHEET

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SOUTH AFRICAN JUDAISM: AN EXPRESSION OF CONSERVATIVE TRADITIONALISM

Jocelyn Hellig

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND THE JEWS

Phillip J. Sigal

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication among Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

The First Reader

Jewish Studies on the Campus

One of the most remarkable developments in the past two decades has been the growth and expansion of Jewish Studies programs in American and Canadian colleges and universities, both large and small. At present, there are nearly a thousand members in the Association for Jewish Studies, the professional organization in the field, and several hundred schools offer programs of greater or lesser scope in the area.

The existence of such programs has been greeted with all-but-universal favor by observers of the current scene. Nonetheless, like every other phenomenon in life, it creates new problems that need to be addressed, and its achievements and weaknesses need to be evaluated.

Accordingly, we have invited a group of representative scholars who teach in these programs at American institutions of higher learning, to participate in a symposium on "Jewish Studies in the University." The participants are: *Robert Chazan, Marvin Fox, Michael Fishbane, Norman H. Stillman and Norman Roth.*

Basically, the focus in this symposium has been the extraordinary expansion of Jewish studies in North American colleges and universities. This remarkable record of progress is not limited, however, to the United States and Canada. *Moshe Davis*, who heads the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, writing from Jerusalem, offers a factual survey of the present status and future prospects for Jewish studies at universities in Western Europe, South Africa, Australia and South America. While his central concern is the teaching of Contemporary Jewish Civilization, his presentation sheds light on the other elements that fall within the purview of Jewish Studies. Thus, his paper offers welcome evidence that the increasing interest in the Jewish heritage, past and present, among university youth is a world-wide phenomenon.

Also related to the issues treated by these symposiasts is an essay by *Jacob Haberman* entitled "Some Changing Aspects of Jewish Scholarship."

Holocaust Theology

In the stream of literature appearing on the Holocaust, one significant and easily recognizable genre is theological — the effort to relate the horror of mass genocide to religious faith. Untold changes have been rung on the theme of theodicy, justifying the ways of God to man and “explaining” the presence or the absence of God during this period of horror.

In “The Reasoning of Holocaust Theology,” *Lewis S. Feuer* presents a trenchant and uncompromising analysis which discusses some of the most popular formulae and approaches to the Holocaust, both pragmatic and theoretical, and finds them wanting. He argues that only if we turn away from the world of phenomena to the region of the Eternal Noumenal Reality can we hope to find a solution — or a resolution — of the problem of radical evil, of which the Holocaust is the most monstrous example.

The possibility — and it is only a possibility — that the evil will dissolve in the Noumenal Reality is supported by the existence in the world of some comparatively rare manifestations of the drive toward ethical good. The natural sciences offer some instances of phenomena, limited in importance, which, nevertheless, have provided penetrative access to significant physical realities.

Building upon Kant, Gödel and Leibnitz, Feuer believes in the possibility of achieving a philosophic understanding of the universe, including the radical evil within it. The paper, both in its critical and constructive aspects, will repay careful study and reflection.

Another View of David

For many centuries after the composition and canonization of the biblical books, it was universally believed that the incidents described in them were historical fact. With the rise of the critical study of Scriptures, from the seventeenth century onward, the historicity of many of these incidents was increasingly doubted and denied, and this tendency reached its apogee in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth.

Then, for many reasons, primarily the discoveries of archaeology, a reaction set in among scholars and, with it, a greater respect for the credibility of the biblical narratives. Needless to add, this attitude was not universally shared. In his paper, “David in History: A Secular Approach,” *Jack Cargill* subjects the events in the life of David, as presented in the Bible, to critical, if not hyper-critical analysis and emerges with a portrait of David far less favorable than that of the traditional figure who became the symbol of the Messiah in later Jewish thought.

Readers will find it an intellectual challenge to contrast Cargill’s presentation with more traditional views of the warrior king of Israel.

Is There Ever A Final Word?

No word is more popular today in discussions regarding the various schools of thought in Judaism than "authenticity." A simple definition, equally popular, informs us that what I believe is authentic and what you believe is inauthentic! Such cynicism aside, the quest for an authentic definition of authenticity is essential if we are to avoid a monopolistic stance on the one hand, or total anarchy on the other.

In his paper, "Authority and Authenticity in Jewish Philosophy," *Neil Gillman* proposes a test for authenticity which he examines in the light of the Jewish historical experience. His views should stimulate new thinking on this central issue.

Our Brethren in South Africa

One of the most vibrant Jewish communities in the world today is to be found in South Africa. Originating almost exclusively with Lithuanian immigrants, it has continued to be a bastion of traditionalism, with a flavor all its own. Its basic traits are described by *Jocelyn Hellig* in her paper, "South African Judaism: An Expression of Conservative Traditionalism."

I may add that, in spite of the differences between American and South African Jewry, both communities, though half-way around the world from each other, testify to the power of spiritual currents to travel around the globe and produce similar phenomena.

Chrysostom and the Jews

Among the Church Fathers who represented the intellectual leadership of Christendom in the early centuries following the emergence of the new faith, St. John Chrysostom is one of the best known. Some, like Origen and Jerome, had scholarly contacts with Jews, but none was distinguished for philo-Semitism. Nonetheless, John Chrysostom's greatest claim to fame may well be his extreme hostility to Jews and Judaism. His sermons, marked by passion and eloquence, served as a seed-bed for the religious anti-Semitism which, tragically, has characterized Christendom in the many centuries following.

The recent full-length treatment of John Chrysostom's relationship to the Jews by Robert L. Wilken is discussed in a review-essay, "Sermons To Be Read In Context," by the late *Phillip J. Sigal*.

R.G.

Jewish Studies in the University

ROBERT GORDIS

AS AMERICAN JEWS BECOME INCREASINGLY conscious of the perils confronting both Judaism and the Jewish community, they are beginning to be troubled by the weaknesses of Jewish education on nearly all levels. Both the Sunday school and the afternoon Hebrew school, with all too few exceptions, have not succeeded in raising a generation of knowledgeable Jews, even with regard to the fundamentals of Judaism. Yeoman efforts are now being expended on dealing with the problems, both theoretic and practical, in this area, in an effort to improve their level of achievement, but the goal is not yet in sight. Virtually the only major positive factor has been the proliferation, on the elementary and high school level, of day schools, most of which are Orthodox, with a substantial number of Conservative and a small, but growing number, which are now Reform. For obvious reasons, they are proving much more successful in imparting Jewish knowledge and, hopefully, inculcating Jewish loyalties. But they, too, have their problems which are becoming increasingly evident as the movement for Jewish day schools expands in all sectors.

The one major development which has been generally recognized as totally positive has been the emergence and progress of Jewish studies in American and Canadian colleges and universities. While many of the programs are limited in the scope of their offerings, others are quite extensive. Most of them are on an undergraduate level and tend to be general in character, offering surveys of Jewish history, religious ideas, Jewish practices, Bible and Hebrew and Yiddish. Enjoying a high degree of popularity are courses concerned with the Holocaust. Graduate courses, while fewer, are increasing in number. They are specialized and deal with various aspects of the Jewish past and present.

While the era of explosive growth in Jewish studies now seems to be over, a steady increase in the number of students and courses continues. The time has come for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of these programs. From the vantage point of the university, questions arise with regard to the relationship of Jewish studies to other scholarly disciplines on the campus. From the standpoint of American Jewry as a whole, there are complex questions with reference to the impact of Jewish university studies on the character and quality of Jewish life and the role of Jewish academicians vis-a-vis the Jewish community.

We have, therefore, invited a group of Jewish scholars to contribute to a symposium on the theme, "Jewish Studies in the University." While each contributor has been free to deal with the subject as he sees fit, the following questions were suggested as guidelines:

1. What are the major positive results of the proliferation of Jewish Studies programs on college campuses in North America?
2. What should be the scope and content of the Jewish Studies program?
3. What are the major problems confronting the teaching of Jewish Studies in the university?
4. What is the relationship of Jewish Studies to other disciplines at present? What should it be?
5. What purposes should the Jewish Studies program fulfill for the Jewish community?
6. What role do you foresee for Jewishly sponsored institutions like Dropsie, Yeshiva and Brandeis, and the various seminaries, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist?
7. Are there any negative aspects associated with the growth of Jewish Studies programs on the campus?
8. What general suggestions would you make with regard to the future structure of the Jewish Studies program or its content?

Some of these have been touched on only lightly, if at all, in the essays contributed to the symposium. They will need elucidation at another occasion.

It is noteworthy — and highly encouraging — that substantial consensus on the achievements and the problems of Jewish studies on the university is to be observed in these essays, reflecting a mood of realistic optimism, shared by all the writers, with regard to the future of Jewish studies on the college campus.

Questions and Answers

ROBERT CHAZAN

SINCE I HAVE NOT UNDERTAKEN A WIDE-ranging scholarly inquiry into the development of Jewish studies on the campuses of North America, but have depended on personal impressions, I think it prudent and fair to indicate at the outset the sources of these impressions. I have taught in two large Jewish studies programs, at The Ohio State University and at Queens College of the City University of New York; I devoted considerable energy during the academic year 1984-5 to a report on Jewish studies on the various campuses of the City University of New York; I have served on external review committees at a number of major universities; I have been active in the Association for Jewish Studies, serving of late as editor of the *AJS Review* and Vicepresident for Publications. From one perspective, all of this should serve to indicate the solid base upon which my observations are founded; from another, my experience is obviously quite limited and so may be the value of my remarks.

Is the phenomenon under discussion — the proliferation of Jewish studies on the campuses of the United States and Canada — real? There can be little doubt that it is. Programs of substantial size are available across the length and breadth of North America, in both public and private universities of all sizes and orientations; smaller programs, often involving only one or two instructors, are yet more widely diffused; the number of serious faculty in Jewish studies has grown consistently, reflected broadly in the ever-expanding membership of the Association for Jewish Studies; new positions at both the senior and junior levels continue to emerge, even during this period of general stagnation in university hiring; the number of students enrolled in Jewish studies courses has surely been expanding as well, although no statistical evidence for this assertion can be adduced. It is worth distinguishing a variety of disparate elements in this proliferation of Jewish studies on university campuses. By far the largest number of students involved are undergraduates. At the same time, there is some professional communal training taking place, e.g., the combined social work-Jewish studies programs offered at a number of universities. The new-style communal personnel graduating from such programs may begin to make a significant mark in American-Jewish community life during the coming decade. Finally, a number of the most prestigious programs serve as training centers for the Jewish

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studies faculty of the next generation. While the number of such graduate students is perforce limited, such graduate training is of great importance for the future of the enterprise as a whole. Despite the importance of these professionally oriented programs, I shall focus on broad undergraduate instruction in this discussion.

Who are the students populating the undergraduate Jewish studies courses on the various North-American campuses? Let us identify at least four disparate groups. The first consists of interested non-Jews. On some campuses, e.g., Queens College and the City University of New York in general, there are — for a variety of reasons — few non-Jewish students enrolled in Jewish studies courses. On other campuses — and this was the case during my experience at Ohio State University — the number of non-Jewish students is substantial. These non-Jews are drawn into Jewish studies courses for a variety of reasons — interest in the formative period of Christianity, concern with the Holocaust, curiosity over the conflict in the Middle East, a desire to understand more fully the heritage of Jewish acquaintances or prospective mates. Whatever the motivation, here is a group whose needs must be taken seriously. A second identifiable group consists of uncommitted Jewish young men and women, seeking to learn something about a heritage with which they have had little contact. Complementing this group is a third cohort, made up of deeply committed Jewish young people. For these, Jewish studies courses represent an opportunity to broaden and deepen their acquaintance with the Jewish past and present. Obviously, their goals and needs diverge markedly from those of the prior two groups. A last group, which should be carefully noted, is the growing number of adult students enrolling in Jewish studies courses. These adults are not fettered by the professional constraints felt by their younger co-students. As they return to the campus, they are free to study whatever they wish and many opt for Jewish studies, as a means of deepening their sense of personal heritage and identity. This is an interesting and often immensely talented group, which has heretofore generally been neglected, but which will probably make itself felt with increasing force over the coming decade.

Serving adequately the needs of such a varied audience is no easy task. At this juncture I would like to abandon the descriptive tenor of these observations and turn prescriptive for a brief moment. At no point can the general mission of the university — whether private or public — be forgotten. The university is in no sense an arm of the Jewish community. It cannot function as a high-level Hebrew school, day school, or yeshiva. The stance must remain at all times objective and non-partisan. Just as those of us who have our own children in college would want them to have available courses in Christianity or Islam which would be objective and non-proselytizing, we must be concerned to provide such a stance for those who undertake a course in Judaism or in some aspect of Jewish history. This involves more than simply regard and respect for non-Jewish

participants; it involves a fundamental recognition of the basic goals and limitations of the university setting. There is little doubt that, on occasion, Jewish studies courses slip into a posture of special pleading; every effort must be extended, however, to obviate such inappropriate behaviors. Many readers may feel that such an objective and impartial stance vitiates the vitality of Jewish studies programs for the purposes of Jewish identity and Jewish survival. To this concern I have two responses: (1) If parents wish a more committed posture, then alternative institutional frameworks exist. Each of the three major Jewish denominations offers undergraduate programs for interested students. Such programs well serve those seeking a more positive and committed position. (2) It has been my own personal experience that objectivity rather than partisanship often exerts powerful appeal to young people of college age and to their older confreres as well. Precisely the lack of partisan preaching often attracts students and maintains their interest. If one assumes a rich Jewish tradition, then that tradition, explicated intelligently, should exercise its own intrinsic fascination and attraction.

A second concern often encountered is that objective and non-partisan equals dull. This surely need not be the case. It has always seemed to me that the professor of English history has no right to glorify the English, but that he has every right to highlight the excitement of studying the history of England. Likewise, while it seems to me inappropriate to teach a course in Jewish history in order to glorify the Jews or to argue their superiority, it seems to me thoroughly proper to teach with excitement the history of a fascinating group called the Jews. Every instructor should surely believe that his subject is of supreme interest; such enthusiasm for subject seems to me an essential ingredient of effective teaching. The first question which all of us should regularly address is — “Why bother?” The best answer seems to me — “Because it (biology, American history, Hebrew literature) is stimulating and fascinating.”

The question of how Jewish studies programs are organized reflects some key issues in the field. In general three patterns of organization have developed in the larger programs: (1) separate Jewish studies departments; (2) programs in which almost all courses are concentrated in departments such as Near Eastern studies or religious studies; (3) interdisciplinary programs, in which faculty members are located in a variety of departments (history, philosophy, language and literature, sociology) and work together to structure and coordinate a Jewish studies program. Clearly, each of these models has its strengths and weaknesses. The underlying problem which must continually be addressed is that scholars in the various areas of Jewish studies must relate to their disciplines and their disciplinary colleagues, on the one hand, and, at the same time, cross disciplinary boundaries in order to link up with others who share their interest in the broad and multi-disciplinary area usually designated Jewish studies. The problems are real and often vexing, but they are in no

sense unique to Jewish studies. All those involved in area studies face them. To be sure, the pressures involved, while sometimes problematic, can often be stimulating and rewarding.

The last question to be posed is an assessment of the effects and significance of the burgeoning of Jewish studies on the university campuses. In the absence of a careful and controlled analysis, answers range from highly pessimistic to wildly optimistic. In making any assessment, the variety of perspectives noted earlier must be borne firmly in mind. What has been the impact on American academic life of the proliferation of Jewish studies? I would hope that the answer is positive — that Jewish studies programs have enriched the university curriculum, have offered university students — Jewish and non-Jewish alike — the opportunity to understand in greater depth one of the western world's great traditions, have opened the eyes of those unfamiliar with the Jewish past to some of its riches, and have offered those already committed the opportunity for broadening and deepening their appreciation of the civilization with which they identify.

For the Jewish community which stands outside of the university, it is legitimate to wonder whether such programs will ultimately produce benefits from its point of view. Will they heighten appreciation of the Jewish past and thus soften recurrent animosities? Will they constitute a new frontier in Jewish education, reaching students at a crucial juncture in their maturation? In the absence of any serious analysis, I would only suggest that a moderate answer seems to be in order. Jewish studies programs are certainly no panacea. They will not solve the lingering problems of anti-Semitism nor will they effect a renaissance of Jewish knowledge and commitment. At the same time, they should not be undervalued. They represent an expression of American willingness to make room for the Jews and of American readiness to look afresh at the Jewish experience. Perhaps most important, they reflect a new American-Jewish openness to Jewish identification and a refreshing interest in aspects of the Jewish past. The ultimate impact of these programs will probably be neither earthshaking nor negligible, but they seem to be yet one more positive development on the contemporary American-Jewish scene.

Some Reflections on Jewish Studies in American Universities

MARVIN FOX

IF WE CONSIDER THE REMARKABLE GROWTH of Jewish Studies programs in our universities from the perspective of the interests of the American Jewish community, there are important lessons to be learned. Most striking is what we learn about the effectiveness of Jewish education in America from the students who come to us after years of study in Jewish schools. A small proportion of them are a glowing testimony to the success of our Jewish educational system. They are the students who come from a handful of excellent Hebrew day schools and Yeshiva high schools. They know Hebrew well, have been given a good grounding in classical Jewish texts, are at home with the Jewish calendar and the Jewish life cycle and, in some cases, have even been trained to think seriously and maturely about Jews and Judaism. University faculty who meet these students can identify in advance, and with a very small margin of error, the schools in which they were trained. In each area of the country there are two or three such schools, of high caliber, whose graduates arrive at the university as well-educated Jews, are able to do serious studies at a higher level, and they are, of course, the delight of their teachers.

The large majority of our students, however, offer a sad and painful contrast to this success story. We see every year large numbers of young people who arrive at the university with anywhere from three to twelve years of Jewish schooling. Many are from afternoon schools, and a fair number are from day schools. These are students, typical rather than unusual, who, after all their years of Jewish schooling, must be placed in the first semester of beginning Hebrew. The worst of them can barely read a line of that language correctly, and the best of them have only a slight advantage over the rank beginners. This advantage lasts for no more than the first two weeks of the semester. Their general Jewish knowledge is no greater than their knowledge of Hebrew. They have some vague bits of information which is generally at a painfully childish level and is often wrong. Even when their Jewish loyalties are solid, and this is by no means always the case, they are largely based on sentiment or sentimentality and rarely on any serious knowledge.

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These same people often have remarkably deep and sophisticated backgrounds in other fields. It is not that they are lacking in intelligence or in the capacity to learn. Quite the contrary. The fact that they have been admitted to fine universities is the best evidence that they are scholastically high achievers. Yet, their years of Jewish education have borne little fruit. Confronting, as we do in the universities, the anger and frustration of these young people, we sometimes ask ourselves whether we might not be better off with no Jewish education at all than with the present system. Over and over we see students who are angry with their parents, their teachers, and their schools. They feel that they have been robbed of time and energy, that they have been the victims of incompetence or indifference. We, their college teachers, see the depth of their frustration as they discover how little they have to show for their years of Jewish schooling.

These remarks are in the nature of a report concerning what we have learned about the ineffectiveness of Jewish education in America. What may perhaps be well known to others, is now painfully confirmed by the experience of large numbers of university faculty in the fields of Jewish studies. Yet, we should not draw from this report the conclusion that the university may be expected to make up for the failures of the Jewish community. University programs are not structured to serve the special needs and interests of the Jewish community, nor should they be. The mission of the university is the advancement of scholarship through serious research and effective teaching. We are concerned with the life of the mind, with opening new frontiers of knowledge, with illuminating the dimensions of human experience and human creativity. No parochial interest may legitimately claim the university as its private instrument. In our role as faculty members we rise above, or stand apart from, our own personal interests and commitments. We may be faithful Jews, believing Christians, liberals, conservatives, Marxists, atheists — but none of this is properly relevant to our teaching and research within the framework of the university. Faculty and students must be committed to the pursuit of truth and must be ready to go wherever that quest may lead them.

In this setting there is no room for the cultivation of parochial interests. To use the classroom or the lecture hall deliberately to promote the needs or interests of a particular religious or cultural group is a violation of the academic objectivity to which we committed ourselves when we chose to become university teachers. For this reason, Jewish studies in the university setting cannot, and should not, be thought of as a method for solving Jewish problems or for addressing specifically Jewish concerns. It is not our task to repair the failures of Jewish education, nor is it our function to build Jewish loyalty or deepen Jewish faith in our students. This work belongs to the agencies of the Jewish community which exist for precisely these purposes. It should be carried out by the Jewish home, and by Jewish schools, seminaries or yeshivot, but it is not the mission of Jewish

studies in the university. One hopes that those responsible for Jewish education will give serious thought to what we have learned and will confront the grim reality which is our collective failure.

Having said this, however, we must recognize that there are, nevertheless, important benefits which accrue to the Jewish community from Jewish studies programs in our colleges and universities. First, and foremost, the advancement of Jewish scholarship, in whatever setting, is intrinsically valuable and should be welcomed by anyone who is concerned with the Jewish future. Second, although our objectives in the university are scholarship and teaching, never propaganda, Jews should recognize how valuable it is, Jewishly, for large numbers of students to participate in such an enterprise. The Jewish students will emerge with deeper understanding and a far more sophisticated appreciation of their own heritage than they are likely to achieve in any other setting. The non-Jewish students come to understand something of Jewish history, literature, and religion and may then see Judaism as an important way of faith and culture. Third, since the vast majority of the teachers of Judaica in our universities are Jews, students have before them role models of committed Jews of high intelligence and deep learning who have chosen the study and teaching of Jewish subjects as their life's work. This can only serve to increase respect for the meaning and value of committed Jewish life as a serious option in contemporary society.

Although these are fringe benefits, never to be directly pursued as the objectives of the university program of Jewish studies, they are present and they are important. The Jewish community should see in the growth of Judaic studies in the universities a positive phenomenon of the highest value. While the universities pursue their own legitimate goals, they do, with no compromise, also serve the interests of the Jewish community. This is no different, in principle, from the fact that while university scientists devote themselves to pure theoretical research, practical applications of their work benefit all of society. Fringe benefits serve important purposes, despite the fact that they are not primary objectives of the university program.

Let us now shift our perspective from the interests of the Jewish community in Jewish studies to the internal state of the field within the universities. Here we can point to great achievements and to massive problems. The achievements are now common knowledge. We have the remarkable phenomenon of a field which was almost without representation in American universities twenty years ago and is now a large and flourishing area of university studies. Hundreds of faculty in several hundred institutions are teaching courses in the various fields of Jewish scholarship to many thousands of students. The offerings are rich and the organizational structures diverse, ranging from a few full departments of Judaic studies through programs which are interdepartmental, to schools which offer only one or two courses. Although predictions about academic fash-

ions are notably uncertain, it seems reasonable to believe that while some very weak programs are likely to disappear, the strong ones are now a permanent feature of the curricula of the institutions in which they are housed. Undergraduate degree programs in Jewish studies are available in a growing number of institutions and graduate programs are beginning to proliferate as well. American trained Ph.D.'s are filling faculty positions all over this continent, as well as in Europe and in Israel. Books and articles are being published and new journals are appearing in various fields of Judaica. Here is a success story which has very few parallels in American higher education.

Our success is also our great weakness and gives pause for concern to those who know and understand the academic needs of the field. We have grown too rapidly, often without plan, without forethought, without having developed a clear sense of our place in the academy or of the requirements for the proper training of our students. Even worse, we allowed this growth to occur before we had qualified personnel to fill the positions which were opening. Too often courses and programs have been established in institutions in which there is no faculty professionally qualified in Judaic studies. Yet, these people build programs, teach courses, and select new faculty for their newly-created teaching posts. The result is that there is much in the field that is academically shoddy, with no one to control the quality and soundness of curricula and instruction. When the blind are leading the blind it is too much to hope that they will know where they should be going or how to get there.

A significant number of the people teaching in the field lack the requisite academic qualifications. There are so-called professors of Jewish studies who cannot read a Hebrew text properly, who have no access to the primary sources of Judaism, and who often are guilty in their writing and in their teaching of the kind of mistakes which are an embarrassing revelation of their incompetence. It is widely supposed by these people that a few choice quotations from Talmud or Midrash, derived from secondary sources, are sufficient to qualify them to make seemingly "deep" and "original" pronouncements about the most complex matters in Jewish thought or Jewish history. We have failed to exercise control over the people who enter the field as teachers; indeed, there is no way in which we could have done so. Universities hire whomever they choose, and often the faculty whom they appoint are an accurate reflection of the incompetence of those who have judged and chosen them.

Happily, there are many exceptions to this disturbing story. We do have a growing number of men and women who have been thoroughly trained, who have a sound mastery of the requisite languages, who know their way around the primary texts, and who also know and understand their own limitations. They do good, solid, scholarly work and they teach in a responsible and often exciting manner. We also have a growing number of institutions whose faculties recognize their lack of qualifications for

selecting colleagues in the fields of Judaic studies and who turn to outside experts for advice and guidance. These able younger scholars and the institutions which are wise enough to select them for their faculties are our best hope for a vigorous and productive future for the field of Judaic studies in our universities.

No less important than the quality of our faculties is the way in which we conceptualize the field and formulate its place within the university curriculum. Most schools have introduced Jewish studies courses with a general sense that they are something good to have in the university, but with no thought as to how these courses relate to the curriculum as a whole. Are we teaching religion, history, philosophy, theology, sociology, literature or what? Is there any academic sense to the very idea of Judaic studies taken as an overall field of discipline? Are specialists in Jewish history to be thought of as historians whose field happens to be Judaism or the Jewish people rather than colonial America or nineteenth century France? Or are they Judaic specialists whose particular area is history? The same questions can be asked with respect to teachers of Jewish philosophy, Hebrew literature and most other fields of Jewish studies. Similarly, we need to ask parallel questions concerning the course offerings. Are courses in Jewish history part of the history curriculum or part of a Judaic curriculum, etc.?

These are not idle questions without practical consequences; they penetrate to the very heart of the way in which we understand our place within the university faculty and the place of our field within the intellectual life of the university. Our answers determine whether we are full citizens of the academy or merely peripheral members engaged in some barely tolerated parochial activity. The way in which instruction in Jewish subjects is organized may quite properly differ from school to school depending on local circumstances, but no school can afford to ignore these basic questions concerning the place of Judaica within its framework.

Our major task, apart from assuring the intellectual and scholarly integrity of the field, is to make sure that Jewish studies does not become a golden ghetto within the university. Unless we develop fully our relationships with the fields of the humanities and the social sciences to which we properly belong, we shall have no standing in the university and we shall also fail in the scholarly development of our disciplines. Here lies our greatest failure. Only a few people have even thought about the matter seriously, and hardly anything has been done in even the best institutions to address these questions, much less to solve them. This is part of the reason that we have produced so much work of poor quality. If our colleagues view our field as academically irrelevant, then they will continue to tolerate the mediocrity which guarantees that it will never have a serious place in the academy. This is the most severe of all forms of rejection within the university community, a rejection we shall deserve if we do not

define ourselves properly, a rejection which we cannot afford since it denies the very academic legitimacy which is essential to our survival and growth.

The entry of Jewish studies into the university presents us with unique opportunities and unique challenges. We have the chance to broaden and deepen our understanding of the Judaic materials with which we work. As we interchange ideas and methods with other historians, philosophers, literary scholars, with the academy as a whole, we come to see our own materials with new perceptions. I refer not simply to the acquisition of the tools of critical scholarship, but to the diverse ways in which the very fields of history, philosophy, and the like are conceived. To treat Judaism, for example, from the perspective of the current methodology in the history of religions is to open ourselves to dimensions of insight which are absent from the traditional modes of Judaic scholarship. When work in Jewish philosophy moves from the methods which were current in the nineteenth century to the various contemporary modes of doing philosophy, new problems emerge and new perspectives illuminate our work. These opportunities are best exploited when we see our fields of Judaic learning as part of the university of today. Living within the university is not a threat to our past, but, rather, a window to our future.

That setting challenges us to think through our field and what we seek for it. We can, if we choose, continue to work in the mode of the *yeshivot*, a method which is enormously fruitful and has made immeasurable contributions to Jewish learning. Or we can continue to pursue our work in accordance with the methods of nineteenth century *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, a mode of critical scholarship which made invaluable contributions to the development of Jewish knowledge. These methods have their place, but that place is not in the modern university. The humanities and the social sciences have grown in sophistication since the nineteenth century. We build on the work of our predecessors. We may be but pygmies who stand on their shoulders, but, standing there, we see beyond their horizons into the new world of scholarship in which we now choose to work. The choice before us is whether we are to be only *in* the university, as we already are, or whether we are also to be *of* the university, a position which has been achieved by only a small number of us. To be *of* the university will require considerable flexibility of thought, a readiness to learn from colleagues in other fields as well as to teach them, a willingness to break with established habits so as to view our subject-matter in new ways.

Like our predecessors who laid the foundations of modern critical Judaic scholarship, we must be, above all, masters of classical Jewish learning. This is a necessary condition for all that follows. Contrary to some views, we must affirm that it is no virtue to be an *am-ha'arez*. But, also, like our predecessors, we must be committed to learning and

adapting all that the modern university can teach us. They came to their universities as finished *talmidei hakhamim* determined to master the critical methodologies of their time. Our present task, when our level of Jewish learning has risen to the requisite heights, is to master the methodologies and conceptual structures which have been developed in the universities of our time. To do less is to risk the danger that our work will be superficial, or even anachronistic. In choosing the university as our setting for Jewish studies, we have chosen to be part of the intellectual enterprise of the late twentieth century as it has taken form in the contemporary university. Our task is to bring our field into that framework of method and thought. This is the only way in which we can both learn and teach legitimately in the academy of our time.

The Academy and the Community

MICHAEL FISHBANE

LEOPOLD ZUNZ WOULD CERTAINLY BE astonished at the present state of Jewish Studies. In its development and diversification, this phenomenon is far beyond anything he could have imagined when, over a century ago, he unsuccessfully appealed to the Prussian government for just one State-supported professorship in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Indeed, the lobbying efforts and apologetic concerns of Zunz now seem to be largely a thing of the past. Academic chairs in Jewish Studies have mushroomed throughout North America and a sense of self-confident entitlement prevails among their incumbents. By the same token, the concerns raised by the Jewish community in Frankfurt, when an academic position in Judaica was to be established there in the 1920s, that the appointee not be a “too visible” Jew, is also largely a by-gone matter. Today, in fact, it is often precisely in order to give Jewish visibility and representation to a campus that some Jewish communities have provided the initial funding for Jewish Studies programs at local universities. Yet, such concerns for visibility and representation also have their ironic — even quixotic — aspects. For our contemporary world can even boast the existence of Jewish Seminars in such venerable academic centers as Heidelberg, Berlin and Warsaw — institutions and cities virtually bereft of Jews. I must confess that such occurrences of “Jewish Studies without Jews” remind me of a quip made by Isaac Bashevis Singer at Brandeis around 1968. He then impishly observed that Yiddish would become an academically respectable subject when there would be no Yiddish speakers around, when the language would have the aura of a dead literature.

Now, with these comments, I am far from suggesting that the rise of Jewish Studies in this country can easily be correlated with a diminution of American Jewish culture or political visibility. Indeed, just the opposite case might be made. If one tallies up the many factors which have occasioned this phenomenon (and this includes the unique democratic tenor of American universities with their ideals of multi-cultural representation, and, also, the new-found academic respectability of Religious Studies, with their methodologically sophisticated modes of inquiry) it would be necessary to include the post-1967 rise of Jewish ethnic-religious pride and power as motivating elements overall. If, therefore, I mention the irony of the revival of Jewish Studies in Europe here, I do so in order to

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highlight from the very outset a negative and easily obscured issue related to the development of Jewish Studies on this continent. What I have in mind is the common expectation of some members of the American Jewish community (particularly the donors of chairs and programs) that Jewish Studies programs in the university pick up the slack of overburdened or dysfunctional local Jewish institutions, that these programs directly serve the religious-cultural community. I believe this expectation to be fundamentally misguided: the academy and the community are two separate cultural institutions, each having separate tasks and powers. Yet, I also believe that vigorous Jewish Studies programs in the university can indirectly empower the cultural life of the community at large, as I shall suggest in my following comments.

As I see it, there are several issues related to Jewish Studies programs in America which need to be raised to the level of public discourse. The first concerns the relationships between parts and whole. By this I have in mind, first, the fact that while many students attend Jewish Studies courses, and some even concentrate in this discipline, introductory survey courses often present Judaism in terms of standard or recurrent patterns in Jewish life and culture and rarely emphasize its diversity, variety and unexpected developments. Thus, for example, while it may not be altogether central to Judaism overall that messianic-mediator figures emerged in the Qumran sect, in late medieval Kabbala, and in different streams of Hasidism, the recognition of such occurrences is also not a marginal matter for any open and nonapologetic historical inquiry into Jewish religious realities and their inner logic. Acknowledgement of such features is also fundamental for one of the larger educational tasks of the university, which is to challenge routinized, self-serving, or institutional interpretations of culture. It hardly needs to be emphasized that this type of inquiry is properly to be performed within the academy, and is not a task of historical reconstruction designed to serve the Jewish community and its particular interests. This is as it must be: the academic task of rescuing facts from oblivion (or repression), for the sake of an honest historical memory, can never be held hostage to the ideal or idealized image of the past fostered by a religious or cultural community. Still, it may also be readily granted that, by providing historical content and images which may be reintegrated into the living Jewish community, Jewish Studies will indirectly challenge monolithic, privileged or otherwise politicized notions of Judaism within the community. This implicit adversarial dimension of Jewish Studies also has another side, which is to reinforce the abiding values of Judaism that extremist or irresponsible cultural entrepreneurs may (willfully or ignorantly) efface. In any event, it is up to the leaders and laity of the Jewish people either to take up or to ignore the public historical information about Judaism which Jewish scholarship makes available.

Relatedly, I also think that it would be important for Jewish Studies

courses to demonstrate the full significance of factors of Jewish creativity — like the textual exegesis of the Bible or Talmud. These have been the carriers of cultural cohesiveness and coherence as well as the causes of intercultural diversity and contestation (both within segments of the Jewish community and between it and the surrounding religious cultures of Christianity and Islam). Faculty members, who are today trained in ever more specialized subdisciplines of Jewish Studies, and who continue to overspecialize in order to establish themselves within the university, must, I believe, restore a personal commitment to the whole of Jewish Studies, as the organic framework within which their academic research and teaching is conducted. Thus, while it may not be possible to know everything, it is, I believe, necessary for teachers and scholars of Judaism to bear in mind that every particular area of study occurs within a wider orbit of influences and consequences — that, for example, the Bible has both a vibrant life within the ancient Near Eastern context but also a profound after-life within the Jewish imagination; or that the study of Israeli fiction has its immediate context among modern genres and literary discourse, but that its wider webs of significance include earlier levels of Hebrew language and literary creativity. In the end, this personal commitment to the whole, on the part of the faculty, will inevitably change the perspective of our students and, so, ultimately, that of the community at large.

This brings me to a derivative matter: the life-context of Jewish Studies. It may certainly seem gratuitous to say that the context of Jewish Studies is the university (and not the synagogue or community forum). But this point must be duly stressed, and for several reasons. First of all, it underscores the fact that, in the rush to establish academic respectability, Jewish scholars have often completely identified with the academy at large and its agenda of issues, methods, and questions. This has arguably been a legitimate and wholly necessary development, both to establish academic respectability for Jewish Studies and to differentiate it from the methods and goals of traditional Jewish learning. In due course, such an orientation has sponsored the maturation of the academic study of Jewish sources, so that today, as a result, we have a clearer sense of what can and cannot be learned from such an approach.

At the same time, by allowing such disciplines as the social sciences to set the tune for the hypotheses used for investigation into Jewish religious-social history, Jewish scholars have often allowed the context of their work to be the sole filter of the content under investigation. The result is a frequent warping of methodological concerns to fit the milieu of the university. Jewish scholars have, it seems, admirably learned the academic jargon of their field, and have learned to talk in a dialect which gives them university respectability. They have not, however, always properly pondered whether these hypotheses are always pertinent to the sources at hand, and whether more traditional methods of investigation

might somehow still help unlock the content of the sources (since it goes without saying that many texts were written within the framework of other methodological assumptions). Obviously, the tasks are not mutually exclusive. In the hands of a social historian like Jacob Katz, a proper integration of traditional and modern methods clearly yields bountiful results, though in less sure hands the results are often disturbing. Here and there one can hear a babbling over method with little or no self-conscious awareness of the impropriety of constructing hypotheses without a thorough grounding in the traditional sources, like rabbinic literature. The self-evident danger is pseudo-scholarship.

Now, let me state at once that I am certainly not advocating that the modern philological-historical method must be controlled by traditional methods, or even that one must take a detour into traditional study before engaging in the academic study of Jewish texts. All that I wish to stress here is that Jewish scholarship assume a dual responsibility: to the academic world, and its development of common methodological agendas and research programs, and to the traditional sources themselves and the methods and agendas which may be suggested by them even though they are not in academic fashion. In this regard, Nahum Glatzer's *Untersuchungen zur Geschichtslehre der Tannaiten* is, in my view, still the best attempt to come to grips with the rabbinic understanding of history on its own terms, far excelling other modern constructions which import altogether alien issues. In my own recent work I have tried to be responsive to newer ways of reading the biblical sources, seeing them as the repository of an ancient, prerabbinic body of textual exegesis — though in profound continuity with it — without abandoning modern critical methods of investigation. Obviously, the methodological integrations here will be subtle and will develop slowly. But it is only in this way, I feel, that Jewish Studies will seriously affect the academic world (and not only it) in more ways than by simply introducing long-neglected content. It is clearly incumbent upon each field of research to assess its present state of inquiry in this double light of academic method and the issues or constraints of the sources themselves.

All this bears on teaching, as well. It goes without saying that the content and goals of traditional religious study should be directed toward enhancing and supporting Jewish praxis and belief. That is natural and proper. But what about the academic study of Judaism? What are its goals?

At the outset, let me emphasize that naive or false dichotomies should be avoided, for there is also spiritual growth in the (academically) responsible presentation and study of Jewish texts. But this is not my main point here, and I would rather separate some of the other issues which get mixed up in thinking about academic and religious study — so that we can have a clearer sense of the goals of the academy. The first concern involves the range of sources and their pertinence. Thus, in a

traditional religious context, it is generally conceded and assumed that all Jewish texts are given for study — if not immediately, then ultimately — and that these sources cohere without fundamental ideological differences. By contrast, the academic study of Judaism regards it as pedagogically impossible and methodologically unsound to present students with anything like the totality of Jewish sources on any issue, or to present these as constituting a monolithic (historical or ideological) bloc. Hence, within the university, the concern to establish historical differentiations within the material is an inevitable by-product of an axiom of modern research. Similarly, pressures of time and space mean that teachers and scholars must also make choices about the pertinence of different documents to the topic considered. Not everything can be taught, nor can everything be studied.

It is just here, I believe, that scholars in the university bear a unique responsibility, which no teacher or scholar can escape, for what is chosen for study and for research, and for how that material is presented. Moreover, I would also stress that this responsibility should be pedagogically communicated to students, since I believe it to be a paramount task of the university to help students realize that *how* one analyzes a text has moral consequences for how one conceives of its meaning, and for the freedom one has in relation to it. Similarly, how one reconstructs an historical event has a direct bearing on how one conceives of the meaning of the past and the freedom one feels in relationship to it. By their choice of examples for instruction and study, teachers and scholars communicate and reassert the mainlines of culture, but also bring to light suppressed lineages of development and imagination. This I believe to be a unique, even spiritual, goal of academic study.

Since we are the sum of our understanding of the past and of what is conceivable in relationship to it, the idolatries of method and meaning must be challenged. The academic context can be a midwife to culture by empowering new readers, new methods, and new meanings — not solely for the sake of Jewish life, but for the sake of an ennobled sense of personhood as a whole. In my view, the primary goal of the academic study of Jewish sources is to teach students how to be thinking, moral, responsible culture-builders. In short, the goal of Jewish Studies in the university may be viewed as a kind of archeology of the strata of the Jewish historical imagination, both for the sake of pure reflection and for the sake of ongoing culture. How individual persons, as Jews, will integrate or transform this knowledge as personally meaningful religious content, lies outside of the direct domain of Jewish Studies programs. Its proper life-context is the private domain of individuals, and the public domain of Jewish religious institutions. Those who would ignore or disregard this fundamental division of cultural tasks may come to grief in the increasingly wide cultural gap now developing. The more Jews who study at universities and find there understandings of Judaism which are not responded to by

the rabbis and others in the Jewish community — for whatever reason: lack of time, knowledge, or interest — the deeper will be the alienation between these groups. I might suggest, therefore, that rabbis, whose studies have been deflected by other professional matters, periodically return to the universities or to their seminaries for refresher sessions. (These might even be supported and required by the synagogues and seminaries themselves. Why not? Isn't such periodic study required of medical personnel and other professionals?) Brandeis has been offering such programs during the summer months, but even here the full potential of such a program has not been tapped.

In short, if there is some concern today, in diverse sectors of the Jewish community, to rebut politicized or fundamentalistic interpretations/reductions of Judaism, or concern over the spiritual disinterest of our youth in the Judaism that they see and grow up with, then strong leadership roles must be assumed by informed and engaged rabbis and lay leaders — a task, I would urge, that can be best promoted through the resources and perspectives of the university. Indeed, by virtue of its setting and moral ideals, academic study is an open process. It is, therefore, the enemy of all who would prematurely close debate on any topic by dogmatic or authoritarian arguments. Accordingly, the university environment of Jewish Studies may serve to generate new constellations of what was, and is, possible in Judaism and Jewish life. Similarly, teachers of Jewish Studies, in their variety and their academic capacity, may project possibilities of cultural integration that provide living models for students. This last is, of course, a delicate matter, both because some Jewish Studies teachers reject this implicit role and because the academic world must never be a sphere of parochial coercion — for or against any religion or cultural tradition. Nevertheless, the reality is that teachers always have been, and always will be, models for students: models of the complex and ongoing balances between past and present upon which every living culture is dependent.

The last point is, to my mind, of paramount importance. While it is not within the capacity of all Jewish Studies programs to cover the entirety of disciplines in the field of Judaica, every effort must be made to make students realize that culture is more than a generation old. By the same token, while not all Jewish Studies programs have the resources and diversity of Brandeis, all must seek to convey the diversity of the Jewish historical experience and guide students in the hard and slow task of learning how to study and evaluate the texts of an old civilization in a responsible way. This is a cultural imperative of the academy, and points to a serious distinction between religious and academic study. I would put it this way: while the practitioners of both types of study may agree that the reading of old texts is a difficult process, religious teachers will always suggest that once one crosses a certain linguistic barrier the texts will somehow be immediately meaningful, ennobling, or (at the least) intelli-

gible. The academic reading of texts is less optimistic, and perhaps more realistic. In its light, old texts are appreciated as alien to, or at least distanced from, modern sensibilities and understandings — approachable only by a respectful crossing of the philological-historical divide that separates their contents from our modern minds and intellectual habits.

Two thousand years of study and recitation have, for example, made the Bible a somewhat friendly and open document to most Jews. Only the Biblical scholar knows how profoundly difficult, impenetrable, or ambiguous its language and allusions often are. From this perspective, the spiritual and intellectual gains for the academic study of the Bible and other texts may, for many moderns, lie more in the *process* of thinking about what it means to read this way or that than in the content itself. Of course, this is not to deny the gains which may be derived from the content as well. I only wish to emphasize hereby that the great historical and religious gap that separates ancient texts and modern readers is properly respected in academic settings. Indeed, this is a gap which religious leaders often obscure or slur over, and then wonder why the old Jewish sources are not self-evidently meaningful to all Jews. I would stress, therefore, as a matter of intellectual principle and historical humility, that the meaning and meaningfulness of Jewish texts is not a birthright — but a matter of hard work and patience. In this respect, it is my belief that the academic world can provide a moral word of caution to all readers. Insofar as it is one of the tasks of the academy to preserve the integrity of the past for the present, it must repeatedly emphasize that the historical and hermeneutical gap between the past and the present must never be closed presumptuously or prematurely.

There is one final issue separating Jewish Studies programs and the Jewish community which I think is fundamental to mention here. For the Jewish people, Judaism has a privileged status, while, for the academy, Judaism is one religion among the many historical religions of the world. Indeed, within the university, the contents of Judaism do not require assent or action; rather, they are viewed as reflecting forms and features of the religious imagination as such (in its creative, destructive, expressive, dynamic, symbolic, or other aspects). Put differently: for the religious community, Judaism expresses traditional values and spiritual commitments, while, for the academic community, Judaism is examined and explored as an expression of the traditional values and spiritual commitments of Jews. Thus, the community may wish that Jewish Studies programs teach Jewish content and values that will directly serve particularist interests and survival. But, as I have stressed, this can never be the task or aim of academic programs. Doubtless, these academic programs will teach aspects of Jewish spirituality and value, but they can never be dependent upon the needs and goals of the community. Were it otherwise, the Jewish community would be paradoxically deprived of at least one valuable resource for historical perspective and critical renewal.

And, yet, for all this, there is perhaps an inevitable meshing of interests between the Jewish community and Jewish Studies programs, insofar as these programs reflect, through their syllabus offerings, some of the contemporary interests of the community. Thus, as is well-known, courses dealing with the Holocaust or Middle East politics are invariably among the most populous in these programs. But I should wish, in conclusion, to indicate another, more subtle, point of rapprochement between the interests of the university and the community. This is the whole matter of how cultural factors alive in the minds of teachers affect what is studied or taught in the academy, and how. That I have, for example, been talking so much in these paragraphs about the role of reading as a means of empowering responsible and moral culture-building is hardly accidental. Are we not so much more informed and aware today, than earlier generations, about the powerful role played by certain texts in framing moral choices, guiding actions, evoking expectations, or dulling initiatives? Do we not also see the political impact and effect of certain fundamentalistic or authoritarian interpretations of texts and events within the Jewish (and non-Jewish) world? Within this framework, I see an urgent moral-spiritual imperative for the academic study of Judaism, as for the Humanities generally, to serve as a countervailing voice for intellectual liberty and dignity within the culture as a whole. For Jews, specifically, such study may serve to safeguard the manifold dynamics of Jewish religious destiny against all attempts at its reduction or trivialization. In this way Jewish Studies in the university may also serve to develop and sustain a more self-conscious, honest, and responsible religious life for the individual and the community.

Is there embedded here an apologetic motif? Perhaps, inevitably so, but this, I trust, is no cause for shame or lowering of professional standards. Professors are not bloodless or blind to their times, even as they affect their times as teachers, as researchers, and as transmitters of culture. For such historical-moral engagement, Leopold Zunz would not, I trust, have been surprised — or dismayed.

The Parameters of Success: Jewish Studies in the University

NORMAN A. STILLMAN

THE FIELD OF JEWISH STUDIES HAS BEGUN to come of age. It is now an integral part of American academe, an accepted and respected discipline at a great many colleges and universities, including the majority of the most prestigious. Although the explosive expansion of the 1960s and 1970s has somewhat abated, the overall picture is still one of growth, with new programs and positions continually opening up faster than the pool of qualified candidates can fill them. (The most recent *Association for Jewish Studies Information Bulletin* lists sixteen Judaic positions for next year, and there are half a dozen more openings for next Fall that have been advertised elsewhere.) The AJS is now a major scholarly organization with a large membership, a well-attended annual meeting, a high-quality journal, and a successful newsletter. The Association has been accepted recently as a constituent society of the American Council of Learned Societies.

A further sign that the Judaics field is coming of age is the noticeable reduction in the *Angst* of its leading practitioners and spokesmen that was so much in evidence throughout the previous decade. Gone is the need to insist upon the academic respectability and high standards of the discipline. Gone are the ardent disavowals of "itinerant Israeli scholars of questionable academic credentials"¹ or of those "whose Bar Mitzvah training" or whose "ability to speak kitchen Yiddish"² might somehow be misinterpreted as grounds for a Jewish Studies position. Gone, too, are the calls for vigilance against charlatans and "quasi-academic hucksters who try to pass themselves off as Holocaust specialists."³ The field is simply too well established for that sort of thing now. University administrators are more likely to know where to turn for advice when seeking to establish a new program or position. Many middle level and senior Judaics scholars enjoy reputations that extend beyond the circle of their Jewish Studies specialization.

The general esteem in which Jewish studies are held is due in no small measure to their ability continually to attract a significant student audience, to win outside community support and interest, while, at the same time, maintaining respectable standards of teaching and scholar-

1. Robert Alter, "What Jewish Studies Can Do," *Commentary* (October 1974): 72.

2. Arnold J. Band, "Editorial," *AJS Newsletter*, No. 11 (June 1974): 1.

3. Arnold J. Band, "Editorial," *AJS Newsletter*, No. 27 (October 1980): 1.

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ship. Although there is, to my knowledge, no accurate survey of the publication output of people in the Judaics field, I believe, based upon campuses with which I am familiar, that the Jewish Studies faculty compare very favorably both in quality and quantity of publications with their colleagues in the cognate disciplines of History, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Comparative Literature, Linguistics, and the various Social Sciences. Indeed, the Judaic faculty's record of creativity is probably, in many cases, higher on average than that of their colleagues in the general disciplines.

The continued success of Jewish Studies has offered an instructive comparison with the so-called Ethnic Studies programs which proliferated on American campuses throughout the 1960s and 1970s. All of these programs — Jewish Studies included — represented the pluralistic vision of American life that developed in the post-war years and flowered in the past two decades. It was a time when the traditional canon of the Western Civilization humanities curriculum was being challenged from many sides, and the parameters of knowledge worthy of general study were being expanded. But unlike Afro-American or Black Studies, which began as, and too often remained, parochial enclaves of ethnocentricity and counter-cultural — even revolutionary — ideology, Jewish Studies were, from their inception, part of the mainstream of academic pursuit and discourse. Furthermore, Jewish Studies offered more career avenues than did other Ethnic Studies, for, in addition to the rapidly expanding opportunities in academe, a Judaics major on the undergraduate level provided an appropriate springboard into Jewish communal service, teaching, or the rabbinate; not to mention the fact that, combined with the necessary prerequisites, it was just as appropriate as any other humanities major before going on to professional school.

It is clearly on the undergraduate level that Jewish Studies have made their greatest impact. The number of students taking elective courses in Jewish history, literature, and thought far exceeds the number of those who major in Judaics. This is, of course, perfectly natural and testifies to Jewish Studies' successful integration into the broad spectrum of the liberal arts curriculum.

Despite the entirely legitimate disclaimers and warnings of virtually all the academics who teach Jewish Studies that the courses which they give are not designed to replace elementary and secondary Jewish education, to foster Jewish identity or loyalty, or, in the ideological jargon of the ethnic and minority studies activists, to "raise consciousness," there is little doubt in my mind, after seventeen years of teaching, that, for many of the Jewish students who enroll in these courses, the search for their own sense of self-awareness as Jews is an important motivation (albeit not the only one). This, too, is perfectly legitimate and cannot be ignored, although, for years, this impetus has been vigorously rejected by many practitioners of Jewish Studies for apologetic reasons. A noted professor at Brandeis

once stated that he and his colleagues were not interested in students "who are in search of their identity" since they were "quite busy working with students who are ready to find other things than themselves."⁴

The agenda of the undergraduate student and the Jewish Studies teacher have not always been — nor need they be — identical. They do, however, converge and are by no means mutually exclusive. The university instructor may raise ambiguities or disturbing questions that the teacher in a religious school would not. That is both his prerogative and his scholarly duty. The courses taught by him may still constitute, nonetheless, a form of Jewish education for Jewish students in a secular age when at least a third of American Jewry has no religious affiliation whatsoever, in an age when the overall level of Jewish learning among young and old alike is appallingly low.

Whether Judaic scholars like it or not (or even admit it for that matter), the fact is that Jewish Studies in the university fill, in part, a Jewish educational function. This fact has been recognized by the laity of many communities who have supported Judaic programs with endowed chairs, visiting lectureships, and other ongoing contributions of monetary and moral support. There are a considerable number of instances in which the impetus for the creation of Jewish Studies on a given campus has come from within the local Jewish community which might typically provide the initial seed money for a pilot program which, if successful, would be taken over by the university. Over a decade ago, Robert Alter questioned the illusory hopes held by some leaders in the Jewish community regarding what could be achieved by Jewish Studies on campus as an antidote to the failure of pre-college Jewish education.⁵ Alter's concerns were not misplaced. As it turned out, neither were the hopes of the Jewish community entirely off the mark. Here again, the agenda of community and academy may not be identical, but they have come together in a confluence of interests which has, I believe, proven to be rewarding for both.

Among the obvious dividends from both the community's and the faculty's points of view are the ever-increasing number of students in Jewish Studies courses. The overwhelming majority of them are Jewish. At the State University of New York's Binghamton Center, for example, at least ten percent (and at times as high as twenty percent) of the Jewish student body, which itself constitutes a considerable percentage of the total number of students, may be found in Judaics courses during any given semester. These students range from those with strong Jewish educational backgrounds to those with little or none at all. (Interestingly, the *yeshiva bokhers* seem to take few or no Judaics courses.) Jewish Studies classes attract several times the number of students that most Jewish student activities do. A course or two in Jewish history or thought, or in

4. Nahum Glatzer, "Jewish Studies: Past and Present," in *Jewish Studies: History and Perspectives: A Colloquium* (Waltham, Mass., 1972), p. 2.

5. *Commentary* (October 1974): 73-74.

Hebrew or Yiddish, is no substitute for a formative Jewish education, but the effects of such courses, while not quantifiable, are not negligible either by any means.

There is another benefit, from the Jewish communal perspective, to come out of the growth of undergraduate Jewish Studies courses. The few Gentile students who can almost always be found in the general surveys invariably come away with a new and more insightful understanding of Jews and Judaism. My own experience (and it has been confirmed by several colleagues on my own and at other campuses) is that many of these Christian students are themselves religious individuals, active in campus or community religious organizations. Sometimes they are planning careers in the clergy or in Religious Studies. Here, again, the effects are not quantifiable, but, given the types of non-Jewish students who are most often found in Jewish Studies courses, they are potentially significant.

The Jewish community, both locally and at large, has benefitted in a very direct way from the growth of Jewish Studies on the college campus. Judaics faculty members typically provide valuable resource people for the community. They are, as a group, far more communally oriented than are their Jewish colleagues in other fields, and it is not uncommon to find them serving on Federation boards, Jewish boards of education and in Jewish organizations. The demands made upon Judaics specialists to lecture at synagogues, community centers, and before every conceivable Jewish group are decidedly greater than those placed upon most other humanities faculty members by the world outside academe. These outside demands and communal activities have, occasionally, taken their toll on some individuals' scholarly productivity or teaching.

Jewish Studies have come to provide an important supplement to the rather meager opportunities for adult Jewish education. Not only are Jewish Studies people in demand to speak in communal settings, but public lectures on campus dealing with Jewish topics usually draw a sizeable audience of community people. Indeed, the latter outnumber, at times, the students and faculty in attendance. This fact has not been lost upon university administrators who are concerned by the overall decline of the traditional college-age population and are interested in the possibilities of attracting an additional adult clientele. The modest program in Judaic Studies at the University of Connecticut's Stamford campus, for example, is aimed almost exclusively at this older group. Although this particular Jewish Studies program's concentrated emphasis on serving adult students is unusual, many Jewish Studies programs at other universities are engaged, to some extent, in outreach efforts toward the adult Jewish community. This development was, I believe, scarcely discussed or even contemplated ten or fifteen years ago when the founding fathers of the Association for Jewish Studies were so busy trying to define the field and assess where it was going. The adult clientele has remained marginal. However, there is a small but consistent number of older students dotting the class-

rooms and lecture halls of the regular Jewish Studies course offerings on campus. These are most often retirees, housewives going back to school, or teachers — and occasionally a rabbi — wishing to earn credit towards a bachelor's or an advanced degree as the case may be.

Despite these notable achievements, Jewish Studies are still beset by a number of serious problems. Much of the success and growth has been on the undergraduate and more general public levels. The development of strong, or anywhere-near-comprehensive graduate programs has been slow and uneven. Gerson Cohen's observation of more than a decade and a half ago is still essentially valid — namely, that the dichotomy between popular surveys and advanced offerings still remains.⁶ However, his criticism that “we neither have reared, nor give any prospects of rearing, a college-trained lay public with any real appreciation of Jewish history, literature, and thought”⁷ is no longer true. There is a growing number of laymen who come out of college with a substantially better historical and intellectual appreciation of the Jewish cultural and religious tradition than that of most American Jews.

The problem that continues to face Jewish Studies is on the graduate level. The vast majority of graduate programs offer either breadth without depth or, more commonly, depth without breadth. With the exception of Brandeis, which is itself an exception among secular universities because of its Jewish sponsorship, and perhaps two or three other institutions, most schools' advanced studies in Judaics revolve around one or two scholars of extremely circumscribed interests. Thus, one major Ivy League program which has produced a considerable number of doctorates in the past decade or so concentrates overwhelmingly upon the early rabbinic period from the Religious Studies approach. Another well-known Ivy League program is centered upon medieval rabbinics and, to some extent, medieval social history. Yet another graduate program on the West Coast is limited largely to Hebrew literature and modern European intellectual Jewish history. Graduate Jewish Studies in many universities are often still only biblical studies.

The products coming out of these programs tend to be rather narrow in both their intellectual focus and in their command (or even their acquaintance) with Jewish sources. This seems to hold especially true in the case of many young scholars who were trained in such areas as Hebrew literature, American Jewish history, modern European Jewish history, or modern Israel studies. Not infrequently, one finds these graduates to have a strong disciplinary training in political science, anthropology, history or comparative literature and translation theory, but with a very limited foundation in Judaics. This state of affairs is, in part, under-

6. Gerson D. Cohen, “An Embarrassment of Riches: Reflections on the Condition of American Jewish Scholarship in 1969,” in *The Teaching of Judaica in American Universities*, ed. Leon A. Jick (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 137-139.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

standable in the light of the atomism and narrow specialization which is so characteristic of graduate education both here in the United States and throughout the world. (The products of Israeli graduate schools, for example, tend to be even more narrowly specialized than their American counterparts.)

The dearth of well-trained graduates coming out of doctoral programs who combine depth of specialization with a broad grounding in Judaics is also understandable in light of the very nature of Jewish Studies, which are, as Michael Meyer has observed, "a reflection of the protean nature of the Jewish entity."⁸ The Jewish Studies rubric embraces a complex of fields whose totality no individual can hope to master. The persistent problem of producing doctoral candidates who have some breadth of training beyond their specific sub-field of concentration is one that afflicts not only Jewish Studies, but is inherent in broad area or civilizational studies. The Middle East field and Islamic Studies are similarly afflicted. So, too, are much of Asian Studies.⁹

The latter fields, however, have made some concerted attempts to remedy the situation. When generous government funding was still available, summer programs with ample scholarship opportunities were run by a consortium of universities — usually one in the eastern and the other in the western half of the country. These programs have continued in a scaled-down fashion even after much of the government largesse dried up. The programs provide intensive language, text, and culture courses to supplement the regular yearly offerings. They also provide much needed remedial training for those students who only entered into area studies on the graduate level.

Jewish Studies could greatly benefit from just such programs since many of the Judaics programs at all but the largest centers are already too thinly spread and, also, since there are many students who do come into graduate school without strong undergraduate backgrounds in Jewish Studies. Such summer institutes need not only the cooperation of different institutions, but the necessary funding for fellowships to enable worthy students to devote themselves to eight weeks of intensive full-time study. To this end, community and foundation sources might be cultivated. Cooperation with the seminaries might prove valuable here. The Jewish Theological Seminary, for example, has run its own summer school in Jewish Studies for some years now. Optimally, students would attend such institutes for several consecutive summers. The need for such institutes only increases with the proliferation of small Jewish Studies programs offering graduate degrees. Although several major universities have committed themselves to developing large graduate centers of

8. Michael A. Meyer, "Toward a Definition of Jewish Studies," *AJS Newsletter*, No. 24 (March 1979): 3.

9. See Richard D. Lambert, *Language and Area Studies Review*. Monograph 17 of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (Philadelphia, 1973).

Jewish Studies, the process is a slow one, and it is reasonable to assume that most graduate programs will remain modest in size and limited both in means and in scope.

Jewish Studies still have a long way to go before their success on the graduate level will be commensurate with what they have achieved on the undergraduate and popular public levels. Admittedly, what success means in the context of graduate Jewish Studies in the broad sense is not entirely clear, since the mastery of classical Jewish sources for most students who deal with the history, anthropology, or sociology of many contemporary Jewish communities is simply not the same as that required by the student of traditional Jewries past and present or of the specialist in Jewish religious studies. The graduate study of Judaics is highly individualistic and, hence, its products are themselves individualistic, diversified and not easily given to definition or assessment.

Jewish Studies in America — Present Problems and Future Prospects

NORMAN ROTH

JEWISH STUDIES, AS A MORE OR LESS INDEPENDENT and multi-faceted discipline, is a relatively recent development within American universities ("American" in this context rightly includes Canada, where very significant programs have been developed, the most important of them being at U. of Toronto and McGill). In the pre-War and early post-War eras, there were individual scholars at some few isolated schools, but they were, for the most part, experts in a particular field (Jewish philosophy: Isaac Husik and Harry A. Wolfson; Jewish history: Salo Baron; medieval law affecting Jews of Germany: Guido Kisch). There were, not yet, "programs" or "departments" of Jewish studies. One must hasten to note that this generalization excludes, obviously, such specifically Jewish institutions as Dropsie, Brandeis, Gratz, Yeshiva and others where the study of Jewish subjects was the chief purpose — or at least a chief purpose — for the existence of the institution.

In addition to the two prototypical situations, the individual scholar and the specialized Jewish school, a rarer third type emerged, the department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies or Semitic Languages and Literature (University of Wisconsin, Cornell, and a few others). These programs grew out of the model provided by old and established European schools, primarily German ones, in the field of biblical and Semitic studies. The emphasis was, therefore, on the text of the Bible, its history and archaeology, and the study of cognate Semitic languages and literatures. There was no interest in anything specifically "Jewish," nor, indeed, in any development in Hebrew literature or language after the biblical period. While this situation has changed dramatically at Wisconsin, other institutions (such as Cornell) have reverted to the old system after a brief flirtation with broadening the base of interest.

My concern here is twofold: what do we mean (or should we mean) by "Jewish studies," and how should we go about trying to achieve an approximation of the ideal?

Unquestionably the most serious challenge to the autonomous cultural survival of the Jewish people was brought about by the twin threats to the survival of Jewish identity: the movement for emancipation in

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France, and the emergence of Reform Judaism in Germany. Both of these resulted in a minority renouncing, on behalf of all Jews, the claim to being a people, a nation. Jews were now “Hebrews” or “followers of the Mosaic persuasion” and the like, but not Jews, and “Judaism” was created. This propaganda succeeded in a spectacular manner, so that “being Jewish” is nowhere defined today, by Jew or by non-Jew, as other than being an affiliate of “Judaism” — i.e., a religion. Jews are not recognized by the United States government as an ethnic or national minority, but only as a religion. For a short period of time, in modern history, it looked as if the League of Nations might restore the proper recognition of Jewish peoplehood, but this was not to last.

It can be argued that the study of “Judaism” has no legitimate place in the academic curriculum of a secular university. The proper subject of investigation for Jewish studies is Jewish *civilization* to which many factors contribute. These include language, literature, history, philosophy, science, art, and also religion (studied as a cultural and historical phenomenon within the totality of the civilization, but never as a substitute for that totality). Furthermore, these areas of investigation are not separate entities, but are interrelated. To the extent that this is not realized (as it hardly ever is), and is not part of an integral program of study and instruction, the result is not “Jewish studies,” but something else entirely.

Too many universities and colleges, including even the most prestigious, have one professor, or possibly two, teaching some course on Jewish history within the history department. In the schools where some Hebrew is also taught, usually it is in an altogether separate department, and, generally, not more than two years of the “modern” are offered. Seldom is biblical Hebrew, let alone medieval, a part of the program. Where biblical Hebrew is taught, Jewish students seldom take a course in it. (At Wisconsin, for example, it is not only possible, but, regularly, the rule to “major” in Hebrew without a single course in biblical Hebrew.)

It is unlikely that there are more than a handful of students, including graduates, in American universities with the ability to read and understand the most basic text of Talmud or Midrash, to say nothing of their comprehending medieval Hebrew commentaries or secular Hebrew poetry.

Nor should we be misled by the inflated offerings advertised in course descriptions of college catalogues, and some of those that appear in the now outdated *Jewish Studies at American and Canadian [!] Universities*, published by Hillel Foundations, need to be taken with a very large helping of proverbial salt. One school lists numerous courses in Jewish studies, including advanced Hebrew, history, etc., when, in fact, there is only one person teaching Jewish history and one other teaching a course in first-year Hebrew! Universities which claim to offer courses in “rabbinical texts” and even medieval and “advanced” medieval Hebrew texts may be

deceiving themselves and, possibly their students, but not the knowledgeable scholars in the field.

Focusing, then, first on the Hebrew aspect, an ideal program would include both "modern" and biblical Hebrew, with students who are majoring in Jewish studies (or Hebrew, if that is the nature of the program) required to take courses in both areas. This is really a minimal requirement, for it would seek only to expose students to a fundamental knowledge of the grammar and style of these levels of the language. It would be unrealistic, however desirable, to expect most undergraduates to continue to study in depth either individual books of the Bible or modern Hebrew literature. It is also unrealistic, at present, to expect any but a few of the major universities to be prepared to teach these advanced courses. Subjects like Talmud and medieval Hebrew texts are altogether out of the question at any university, and even in the extremely rare instances where there are faculty qualified to teach them, there are no students qualified to study them.

Students who are not planning a professional career in Jewish scholarship should, nevertheless, be exposed in some manner to the richness of this literary tradition. A viable alternative is to offer "literature in translation" courses, where suitable representative texts from biblical through rabbinical, medieval (especially secular poetry and literature) and modern Hebrew literature can be handled in English. Such courses, again, ought to be required for those majoring in Jewish studies or Hebrew. Experience shows, incidentally, that such courses are extremely attractive to non-Jewish students as well, and there are many benefits to be gained from making this almost totally unknown cultural tradition available to wider awareness.

For those students who continue beyond the level of simple conversational "modern Hebrew," the only subject for advanced Hebrew study ought not to be Israeli literature and poetry. There is an evident universal neglect of Hebrew prose writing and reading in our programs, with virtually no focus on serious expository Hebrew reading. It is appalling to find students with several years of Hebrew study who cannot read and understand the simplest article in a Hebrew journal.

A final word concerning Hebrew in the program of Jewish studies. Until quite recently there has been apparently little effort to develop any kind of theoretical base for the teaching of that language in American colleges and universities. Almost no research has been undertaken to determine the nature of typical mistakes made by American students in learning the language, nor has the question been raised as to why we are teaching Hebrew at all and what kind(s) of Hebrew should be taught. Recent developments within the National Association of Professors of Hebrew appear to be more encouraging, and perhaps some of these issues will soon be addressed.

Most colleges and universities cannot possibly undertake a complete

program of Hebrew language and literature and, for their students, one or two years of Hebrew will have to suffice. Where there are people who actually major in Hebrew, their needs are probably well served by existing programs, with the exception of the neglected areas previously mentioned. However, students whose primary concern is "Jewish studies" may not be receiving the attention they deserve. For them we must ask: how much Hebrew, and what kinds of Hebrew should they be taught?

Turning our attention now to another model for Jewish studies, we find, in some institutions, "programs" of Jewish studies. Many of these are characterized by a perplexing level of specialization, sometimes offering only one or two courses, but of an intensely specific nature. The model would seem to be that of a graduate seminar, and one wonders if that is not, in fact, exactly what has inspired these courses. However, what may have been appropriate for a specific graduate seminar at the institutions where these teachers were trained is not necessarily appropriate instruction for undergraduates. Do the latter really need (even assuming there is anyone qualified to teach) a course on Gnosticism and Merkabah mysticism? Two fairly prestigious schools offer separate courses on Jews in Muslim Spain and Jews in Christian Spain, but no basic course on medieval Jewish history in general (or modern Jewish history, for that matter). What is noticeably lacking in almost all of these programs is a sense of coordination and cohesiveness. Individual courses on Judaism in the Hellenistic world, for instance, or even "modern Jewish history," are, in themselves, quite valuable, but what is lacking is a general overview of Jewish history from the ancient through the modern periods.

Very often, "Jewish studies programs" are a rather hastily assembled and haphazard association of whatever occasional courses Jewish teachers might be willing to offer in their department on some Jewish subject. "Programs" put together in this way can hardly be expected to have any direction or continuity. Interestingly, and sadly, exactly the same approach is used by The Hebrew University in Jerusalem in its junior year abroad programs, with the additional problem that its completely unrelated and entirely too specific courses for American students are taught by graduate students, rabbis, and others not even affiliated with the school, much less academically qualified to teach there.

While many people would, no doubt, acknowledge the importance of broad survey courses in Jewish history (although surprisingly few schools actually offer them), an almost immediate problem might be the difficulty involved in obtaining the expertise to teach them. In institutions where it would be possible to share the instruction among several people, each with a proficiency in certain periods or topics, this might be a solution. For most schools, however, this is obviously not possible. There is then simply no choice but to do the necessary reading, at least of a wide-ranging sample of secondary sources (and for the more ambitious and conscientious, also of original sources), to prepare for such survey courses.

Only when sufficiently broad and yet thoroughly prepared and detailed survey courses in Jewish history have been made a viable part of the program should more narrow and specific courses be initiated. What is to be gained, for example, by teaching a class on the Jews of medieval Spain when neither the teacher nor the students have the requisite proficiency in Arabic, Hebrew, medieval and modern Spanish? And when virtually all of the important sources and secondary literature are in one or more of these languages, does the library contain a sufficient collection of these materials to make research possible?

So far we have considered only two areas of Jewish studies, Hebrew and Jewish history. Ideally, a program which seeks to concentrate on Jewish civilization ought to include as well courses in medieval and modern Jewish philosophy, Jewish art and music, Jewish literature in languages other than Hebrew (Spanish, Ladino, Yiddish, German, French, English). One realizes, however, that there are one or two outstanding experts, at best, in each of these fields. Obviously, it is impossible to offer such material as a routine part of the program in most universities.

Is there an alternative? Fortunately, the answer is yes. Some years ago I realized that I was teaching only upper division courses, open to Juniors, Seniors and Graduate Students. This did not seem to be desirable. Being in the enviable position of being able to teach both literature and history courses, I found it easy to change the Hebrew Literature in Translation course number to allow lower division students to enroll. In addition, and perhaps more important, we created a new series of courses called "Topics in Jewish Civilization."

These classes are aimed primarily (though not exclusively) at the lower division students. Every semester a different topic is presented, including Modern Jewish Thought, History of Zionism, Medieval Muslim and Jewish Philosophy, Judaism and Hellenism, Jewish Civil Law, and American Jewish History. The response has far exceeded the expectation, and these have become among the most popular courses in the department. Obviously, they require a tremendous amount of preparation, but the results more than justify the work involved. In addition, there is the possibility of inviting guest lecturers both from within the university and from without.

As an example of how effective such a course can be, let me point to the topic of Jewish Civil Law, which is almost never taught in Jewish studies programs in our universities. The problem was, *could* it be taught, to students who not only have no yeshivah background, but most of whom could not even read Hebrew? As experience showed, it most certainly can. Several of the students, including some from the Law School, were not even Jewish, but were very interested in the subject. The results can only be described as spectacular. The instructor was thoroughly pre-

pared, of course, in the study and interpretation of Jewish civil codes and responsa.¹

Cohesiveness and direction within the program of Jewish studies must be met by another largely neglected area of concern: contact and cooperation beyond the program or department with colleagues and students in other fields. In spite of the well-meant intentions of many, Jewish studies, in too many cases, has been allowed to degenerate into an "ethnic" program existing in splendid isolation from the rest of the academic community.

For obvious historical reasons, there is an almost paranoid fear of the Gentile world among Jews and, apparently, teachers of Jewish subjects in the academic community are not altogether free of it. How else can we account for the isolation of Jewish scholars and teachers from their colleagues which is so painfully evident? Another explanation does suggest itself, namely, some may feel that their non-Jewish colleagues have no particular interest in what they are doing. If so, let them be assured this is not the case.

As an active member for several years now of many scholarly organizations not dedicated to Jewish studies but, rather, to the broader scope of history, such as the Medieval Academy of America and other such groups, I have been able to observe several important matters bearing on this discussion. In the first place, Jewish scholars — i.e., teachers of Jewish studies — are conspicuous by their absence in these organizations. Even though the Medieval Academy, in particular, has singled out some of us for the distinguished honor of its highly prestigious awards, Jewish scholars stay away from its meetings in droves. Only in the last few years have a handful of brave individual Jewish scholars begun to attend the meetings of the International Congress of Medieval Studies, held annually at Kalamazoo, which routinely attract close to two thousand people from all over the world. Secondly, long experience and contacts with scholars at these meetings and conferences has shown that in many cases they are completely unaware that there even are programs of Jewish studies on their campuses. They should be enlightened.

On the subject of cooperation in research, another peculiar situation deserves mention. Many years ago, the University of Wisconsin, under the able direction of Prof. Marshall Clagett, established the first Institute for Research in the Humanities. He then went on to Princeton to establish an institute there, and there are currently several others at distinguished schools. With one or two notable exceptions at Princeton over the years,

1. It should be noted that some of these codes are now available in English translation, while generous and valuable help in any area of teaching Jewish law is available for the asking from Prof. Dov Frimer, director of the Institute of Jewish Law at Touro College in Huntington, N.Y., and from Prof. Bernard Jackson, editor of the *Jewish Law Annual* in England. Dr. Nahum Rakover, of the Ministry of Justice in Israel, a foremost authority, is also particularly helpful.

Jewish scholars are again conspicuous by their absence as fellows at these institutes.

Another area of great concern, and in some ways perhaps the most important, should be the students we teach. Not all of them are Jewish, and this is a desirable and beneficial thing. It is important that non-Jews be attracted to our courses so that they may get a better understanding of Jewish civilization, and it is perhaps equally important that the Jewish students be involved in the exchange and dialogue which takes place. Since these courses are being taught, for the most part, within secular and non-sectarian schools, it is important to keep in mind that Jewish studies courses must be academically sound and justifiable. We are not concerned primarily with "improving Jewish identity" for our students.

On the other hand, Jewish students enroll in these courses for a variety of reasons — to broaden their perspective, to eliminate their appalling ignorance, to correct their misperceptions and superstitions. Yet while these courses cannot and must not be used as an extension of Sunday school or Hillel, it must be realized that many of these students will go out to become, we would hope, Jewish leaders of the future. They must get the very best possible education in Jewish civilization which can be provided to them. This should result in, among other things, an appreciation of what the Jewish community has been and how it has functioned in various periods and countries in Jewish history. (A case in point: was the *kallah* organized by the Babylonian geonim merely an interesting historical footnote, or does it have some possible implications for Jewish life today?)

Similarly, Jewish studies faculty are in a unique position to be able to influence students in making career choices, which might include Jewish ones, should they have the inclination and ability. Not only is there a desperate need for educated and properly trained rabbis, but other careers are literally there for the taking in Jewish community service, youth work, international relations and the like. It is a sad fact that there is almost no information about any of these opportunities available for students, and a place to begin might be contact with the various professional programs which train people in these fields.

Finally, there is the question of the responsibility of the Jewish community to Jewish studies. While individual Jews, and some individual communities, have given money to some programs, and, indeed, there has been a ridiculous proliferation of "chairs" of Jewish studies in recent years (a dangerous trend, in that rarely are there candidates worthy of the distinction of holding a named chair, with the result that the endowment arouses ridicule and jealousy in the academic community), there is little evidence of any systematic effort to support Jewish scholarship or research. The model of the Wisconsin Society for Jewish Learning, established over twenty-five years ago for the support of our program, and, more recently, that of the Milwaukee campus, has unfortunately not been

widely imitated. In addition to research support for the faculty and library, the Society provides scholarships and other incentives for students.

The desperate need for a substantial pool of research and publication funds, for the editing of the more than 200 important medieval Jewish works which have not yet been published, for example, is truly one of the major needs of the Jewish community.² There are also students and scholars doing important research in Israel and elsewhere who are in great need of support. It is a shame that the wealthiest Jewish community in the world cannot find the means to help in their important work.

Let this article conclude with a summary, in terms of specific and practical proposals, of what needs to be done.

1. Jewish Civilization — A Focus: Jewish studies must be broadened to focus on the totality of the Jewish civilization, not just isolated areas of study.

2. Hebrew: Where possible, the program should be strengthened to include all levels of language and literature, biblical to modern. Where this is not feasible, introductory language courses should be supplemented with Literature in Translation, again including biblical, medieval, and modern.

3. Jewish History: An awareness of the periodization of Jewish history is essential; in other words, *what* should be taught and *why*? Specialized, narrow seminars should be limited in favor of broader survey courses covering the whole of Jewish history.

4. Jewish Culture: Hebrew and history are not the totality of Jewish civilization, and some framework should be found for teaching Jewish literature, philosophy, art, music and other subjects. The model of "Topics in Jewish Civilization" seminars is suggested.

5. Moving From the "Jewish Ghetto": Broadening contacts with colleagues in other disciplines and risking involvement in general academic and professional associations and conferences.

6. Focusing on Students: Defining and meeting their needs and considering their future development and contributions.

7. Response of the Community: It is to be hoped that somebody will take the initiative to begin implementing some of the projects proposed.

Strengthening and continuing to expand the Jewish studies programs in our colleges and universities may be the single most important task facing the American Jewish community.

2. Specific recommendations about this and other needs were outlined in my article "The Needs of Jewish Scholarship in America" (JUDAISM 27 [1978]), but while it was widely acclaimed, nothing whatever has been done in response to even one of the suggestions there.

On University Teaching of Contemporary Jewish Civilization

MOSHE DAVIS

WRITING IN A SECULAR CULTURAL VEIN, Edmund Wilson, the doyen of American letters, explained why he considered the study of Judaic sources indispensable to his "ideal university." Such study, he said, gave him insight into a whole point of view, "a system of mental habits" — the Hebrew mind. He then proceeded to propose a two-year curriculum of "courses in the literature and history of the Jews for students — both Gentile and Jewish" . . . that would enable them "to correlate the adventures and achievements of the Jews with those of the rest of the world."¹

The intellectual imprimatur of this American master in the fifties is but one example of the world-wide legitimation of Jewish Studies in the academies. While the study of classical Hebrew sources has a centuries-old tradition in European universities — it is generally accepted that the first Chair of Hebrew was established at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1313 — the remarkable spurt in all western countries came in recent decades. According to our most recent, as yet incomplete registry, departments, programs and courses have been established in some nine hundred colleges and universities in the world.²

This process of legitimation has given rise to new emphases and new fields, specifically in Jewish Studies, but also in the general disciplines. One such important area is Contemporary Jewry, an interdisciplinary subject, substantively concerned with the study of the Jewish condition in our times and relying methodologically on disciplines in the Humanities and the Social Sciences as, for example, History, Literature and Thought, Demography, Sociology and Political Science.

The short history of this field is reflected in extensive bibliographical sources. Perhaps the most immediate insight into select courses as they have evolved on different campuses on several continents is the volume edited by Gideon Shimoni, *Contemporary Jewish Civilization: Selected Syl-*

1. See his essays, "The Need for Judaic Studies," *A Piece of My Mind: Reflections at Sixty* (New York, 1958), pp. 146-53; "On First Reading Genesis," *Red, Black, Blond and Olive* (New York, 1956), p. 387.

2. *World Register of University Studies of Jewish Civilization*, Inventory of Holdings — Number 1, Mervin Verbit, ed. (New York, 1985).

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labi.³ The present illustrative overview, though by no means comprehensive, is a briefer introduction to curricular approaches, problems and needs in different regional settings. With this comparative description we can relate to deeper socio-educational forces which motivated and shaped the present state of university teaching of Contemporary Jewry while we take into account specific local problems. And, in this manner, we will be better able to discern the special responsibilities which rest on those academics who view their vocation from the wider perspective of a global Jewish People.

Illustrative Survey

Western Europe

I begin with the Jewish community of France because it is at the vortex of Western European Jewry. A dominant positive factor in the current Franco-Jewish identity pattern — which differentiates French Jewry from other communities — is a *familial* relationship with Israel. Important in this context is the basic fact that the Jewish community of France is the only mixed demographic community where the majority, as in Israel, is rooted in Sephardi Jewish culture and institutions.

The North African Jewish relocation and its native French-born second generation have created new socio-cultural compositions which are also impelling factors in the rapid growth of Jewish Studies. According to a recent survey, more than 40% of French Jewry has an academic background. These transformations have implications for our subject that are far beyond our subject.⁴

The main center for the study of contemporary Jewish civilization is the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), linked to Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, which functions in the framework of the Near and Middle East Department. It began as a Hebrew language cathedra but soon expanded to include Jewish History, Literature, Philosophy and, recently, the Sociology and Psychology of Contemporary Jewry.⁵ Two new chairs have recently been established — in Contemporary Jewry and Modern and Contemporary Hebrew Literature. All of these subjects are under the rubric of the *Hebrew* section at Paris III — a pattern which has occurred in other countries as well.⁶ In France, the status of the Hebrew language is equal to that of all other foreign languages

3. New York, 1985.

4. See Jacky Akoka, "Vote Juifs ou Vote des Juifs?," *Pardès*, I, 1985, p. 120. Also the comprehensive volume of Doris Bensimon and Sergio DellaPergola, *La Population Juive de France: Socio-Démographie et Identité* (Jerusalem, 1984).

5. See, for example, the course, "Studies in the Contemporary Sephardic Communities," by G. Nahon, in Michel Abitbol, ed., *Jewish History: Sephardic and Oriental Studies*, Selected Sylabi (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 47-50.

6. INALCO, *Livret de l'Etudiant*, 1984-1985 (Paris), pp. 115-117.

— including English — even in the government high school system.⁷ Interestingly, the teaching of Yiddish is also included in the department of American Studies in Sorbonne VIII.

In the unique French government-supported university construct, at least two additional features are outstanding for the purposes of our analysis and overarching interest. The first is the large number of doctoral dissertations in Contemporary Jewry presently under supervision. The second is the available, but not adequately utilized, Franco-Israeli interchange. In 1980, Doris Bensimon, a pioneer scholar in this field in France, published a "Catalogue of Doctoral Theses." At that time, out of 455 themes in nine categories of Jewish Studies, 108 dissertations in Contemporary Jewry were being supervised, mainly in four areas: (1) Jewish Communities (languages and culture, largely of Asian-African origin); (2) Judeo-Christian Relations; (3) Contemporary Middle East; (4) Anti-Hebraism — Anti-Semitism.

In the later report, *Catalogue Des Doctorats Hebraica — Judaica, January 1979-December 1981* (December 1983), the breakdown is as follows: Out of 449 themes in twelve categories of Jewish Studies, 171 Contemporary Jewry dissertations were being supervised, mainly in (1) Literature; (2) Philosophy, and (3) The State of Israel. No wonder that Professor Annie Kriegel, the distinguished sociologist, referred to this proliferation as an "explosion," wryly remarking that "even if some of these theses are not completed, the interest of the professors can continue."

This leads directly to the other distinguishing feature of Jewish Civilization Studies in France: utilization of Israel as a resource center for complementary university training. In 1975, the Centre Inter-Universitaire des Hautes Études Juives Modernes et Contemporaines was established with the express aim "to encourage the development of existing cooperation between the State of Israel and academic circles in France," and the Articles of Incorporation envisage complete involvement with contemporary Jewish scholarship in Israel, including formal faculty exchange. The issue in France, then, is no longer interest or conceptualization, but high-level implementation.

Surveying the rest of continental Europe, we note that courses on contemporary Judaism and the Jews are, remarkably, being introduced as factors in world civilization even in settings where there are few or no Jewish students as, for example, in Denmark, Finland, Holland, Spain

7. Catalogues and syllabi referred to in this paper — unless otherwise stated — are available in the University Resource Library of the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization in Jerusalem. Without entering into detailed catalogue descriptions, it is important to indicate that courses in Contemporary Jewish Civilization are offered in the curricula programs at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in addition to Paris VII and VIII; also at the Université de Lille III and Nancy II. See, especially, syllabi of Ms. D. Schnapper in Jewish Identity (E.H.E.S.S.), Jean-Marie Delmaire in Jewish Civilization (Lille III), and Dr. J. Strauss in Modern Hebrew (Nancy II).

and Sweden.⁸ Moreover, courses are being expanded where Judaism was formally taught only as a counterpart of the classical tradition as, for example, at universities in Austria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland.⁹ Documentation in the university catalogues clearly reveals that the prevailing instruction has moved towards the modern period with the accent on Holocaust studies, contemporary Judaism and Israel. Indications of this movement can be found in the course descriptions of L'Institut Martin Buber in Brussels, Belgium.¹⁰

In her most recent report, *Enseignement Des Langues Et Civilisations Juives Dans Les Universités Européennes*, (Typescript, Decembre 1985), Doris Bensimon brings to the fore developments in Catholic and Protestant university theology departments, where courses in modern and contemporary Jewish philosophy and history have been introduced. This is most characteristic of theology departments integrated into general university systems. Modular examples indicate the expanding trends in Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. A course in "Philosophie juive contemporaine: Martin Buber et E. Levinas" is offered in UFSIA-Universitaire Faculteiten Sint-Ignatius in Antwerp; Johannes Gutenberg Universität in Mainz gives two courses — Philosophie Juive moderne and Philosophie Juive contemporaine. Similar courses are offered at the Université de Lausanne and the Universität für Jüdisch-Christliche Forschung der Theologischen Facultat, Luzern.

Professor Bensimon's report reflects that the teaching of the Hebrew language is also widespread in European universities. There are courses in Modern Hebrew at the Universities of Bruxelles, Gent, Antwerpen, Groningen, Leiden and Wien, where Yiddish is also taught. As for courses in Contemporary Jewry, it is interesting to note their rapid expansion in such German universities as the Technische Universität in Berlin, Hochschule für Jüdische Studien (Heidelberg), Universität Zu Köln and Universität München.

Great Britain, South Africa, Australia

In England, with some notable exceptions, there are not many dra-

8. Some examples will suffice. The Juda Palache Institut at the University of Amsterdam offers courses in Modern Hebrew Language and Literature, Yiddish and Jewish History. At the Katholieke Universiteit (Holland) there is a B.A. program in Hebrew which includes Yiddish courses. Universidad de Granada (Spain) offers a course on "The History of Israel" which includes modern and contemporary Jewish history as well as topics covering the State of Israel. The course, "Hebrew Literature," includes contemporary Hebrew literature.

9. At the Vienna University Judaic Institute there are courses in Yiddish, Modern Hebrew Language and Literature and Modern Jewish History. In Italy, a Chair of Judaic Studies was recently founded at the Pontifica Università Gregoriana, which offers four courses in modern Judaism.

10. Four courses are offered in the Second Temple, Middle Ages and Renaissance periods, while there are three courses in Modern Jewish History and the Holocaust. In the Civilization section there are courses on Israeli Society, Contemporary Judaism and lectures on Zionism.

matic vistas for Jewish Studies. The fault is inherent in the present state of higher education and the British Committee of the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization is now intensively engaged in a rescue operation to countervail the present university policy of reducing tenured posts with the consequent reduction of staff.¹¹ Nevertheless, new chairs, lectureships, research projects and colloquia have been established in a number of institutions, including Oxford, Cambridge and London's University College. Wherever Jewish Studies are established, courses in contemporary Jewry also develop, more often than not at a greater pace than ancient or medieval subjects.¹² Here, too, the Modern Hebrew, Israel, contemporary Jewry nexus is increasingly apparent as, for example, at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies (established in 1972). With David Patterson as the Centre's president, there has been a marked growth in this direction, particularly through its developing Fellowship program.

The work of Lionel Kochan, on the other hand, at the University of Warwick, exemplifies the general and modern Jewish history interconnection. Dr. Kochan is a member of the general history department and his courses are designed to overlap with those of his colleagues, thus being available to all students of the historical disciplines.¹³

A review of sample syllabi provides a rapid introduction to the variety of courses now given in such departments as Religious Studies, Sociology, Political Science and Education at the universities of Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, London, Manchester, Sterling and, in Scotland, at Edinburgh and Glasgow.¹⁴

Grouping South Africa and Australia with the United Kingdom in this overview reflects academic rather than political structure. Despite South Africa's disjunction from the Commonwealth countries and Australia's geographic distance, cultural and educational involvement with Great Britain continues, certainly among the academic communities.

11. See *Report on Teaching Jewish Civilization at British Universities*, especially statements of Leon Yudkin and Philip S. Alexander (Jerusalem, 1985). Also, Simon Rocker, "Professors Launch Rescue Operation," *Jewish Chronicle*, Nov. 8, 1985: 8.

12. *The Register of Research in Jewish Studies in Great Britain*, published in 1975 and sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies and the British Association for Jewish Studies, forecast this evolving trend. A follow-up Register to update this information is urgently required. Cf. B.A. Kosmin and N. Chizzard, Research Report on "Theses of Jewish Interest Currently in Preparation in the Social Sciences at British Universities" (November, 1985).

13. For courses in modern Jewish History see "History" in *The University of Warwick: Guide to First Degree Courses 1985*, pp. 40-41.

14. For a preliminary list of courses in contemporary Jewish civilization in British universities, cf. *Teaching of Jewish Civilization in British Universities*. See also Mervin Verbit, ed., *World Register of University Studies in Jewish Civilization* (New York, 1985), pp. 56, 73, 82, 101. Syllabi list courses on "The Emergence of Modern Israel" given in the Education Department at the University of Glasgow and in Modern Judaism, Jewish Philosophy and Mysticism in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Edinburgh.

As we review the documentation from universities in South Africa, the interconnection among the subjects of Hebrew, Israel and Contemporary Jewry comes to the fore again. Hebrew language and literature are indispensable components, while Israel is the pulsating force. It should be noted that the present-day structure of South African tertiary education, with its English and Afrikaans medium universities and the newer "ethnic" universities for Blacks, reflects the compartmentalized nature of the country's educational systems. But within this structure, whether at the major centers of Jewish student population at the universities of Cape-town and Witwatersrand, or at the universities of Natal and South Africa (UNISA), visiting academics from Israel have made important contributions to the intensification of Jewish Civilization programs. Also, in Afrikaans medium universities (e.g., Rand Afrikaans University, University of Port Elizabeth, and Porchefstroom University), departments and Faculties of Divinity maintain close contact with Israeli universities, especially in the fields of Hebrew language and archaeology.

A vital thrust forward in this sphere was given by the Kaplan Centre at the University of Capetown. Established in 1980, the Centre "seeks to stimulate and promote the whole field of Jewish Studies and research at the University with special focus on the South African community."¹⁵ Observation of its dynamic development since its inception, and of its first series of publications, indicates that the Centre will energize the traditional Hebrew and Religion departments as courses in Jewish thought, history and sociology are woven into the fabric of the curriculum.¹⁶

New winds are blowing at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, which has a Jewish student population of 4,000 in the general enrollment of 17,000. While it is too early to describe the plans afoot, we can forecast the establishment of a chair in Jewish Civilization, with significant emphasis on contemporary Jewish Studies.

Perhaps the best way to understand the delayed development of contemporary Jewish subjects in Australian universities is to cite from the Introduction of S. Encel to the volume on *Australian Society*:

The year 1983 (emphasis M.D.) also represented a significant anniversary — the silver jubilee of the establishment, or re-establishment of sociology as a recognized academic discipline . . . This fractured history is, in itself, a commentary on the social and intellectual development of Australia, and above all on the development of higher education and the fragmented growth of the social sciences.¹⁷

Jewish Studies at Australian universities began, interestingly enough, in 1945, at the two oldest-established institutions, the Universi-

15. See Report, Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre 1980-84, *Jewish Studies and Research*, University of Cape Town.

16. See Milton Shain, "The History of South African Jewry — 1800 to Contemporary Times," in *Contemporary Jewish Civilization*, G. Shimoni, ed (New York, 1985), pp. 132-141.

17. *Sociological Essays*, ed. S. Encel and L. Bryson, Fourth Edition, (Melbourne, 1984).

ties of Melbourne and Sydney. Current files reveal a random list of Jewish Studies courses at ten different colleges and universities — most of them relating to Hebrew language and Jewish education — but none of these courses or programs lead to a degree, and there seems to be no immediate prospect for such a development.¹⁸ Yet, both at Victoria College in Melbourne and the Sydney College of Advanced Education, Jewish Studies strands have now been introduced, some of them at degree level, and individual courses in aspects of Contemporary Jewry have slowly found their way into the curricula of the University of Western Australia (Middle East), the University of New South Wales (History and Sociology, German Studies), and the Australian National University (Hebrew).

In sum, interest in the teaching of Jewish Civilization at the university and college level has steadily increased, and the Jewish community has taken steps to develop policy-making and financial support through its recently created Joint Committee for Tertiary Jewish Studies (under the auspices of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies). Undoubtedly, studies in Contemporary Jewry and Jewish Education will begin to develop more rapidly, as is the present pattern in other countries.

Latin America

In the Latin American ambience, social forces are crucial factors in the forging of university curricula. In fact, the direction of university teaching is often affected by government upheavals. The university, it turns out, is a strategic environment for the future of Latin American Jewish life.¹⁹ It is estimated that some two-thirds of university-age Jewish youth in the major Latin American cities are enrolled in academic institutions, and university courses on Jews and Judaism have either been initiated by Jewish communal auspices or depend on such support. For example, the first Contemporary Jewish Studies course in *any* Argentinian university, initiated at the Jesuit Universidad de San Salvador in Buenos Aires in 1973, was a result of the efforts of the American Jewish Committee's South American Institute for Human Relations.

Given these socio-political factors, cooperative programs, including contemporary Jewry courses, are being developed jointly at universities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.²⁰ In

18. Frankston State College, James Cook University of North Queensland, University of New South Wales, Institute of Catholic Education, La Trobe University, Monash University, University of New England in New South Wales.

19. See especially the Introduction to Haim Avni's latest volume, *Emancipation and Jewish Education: A Century of Argentinian Jewry's Experience 1884-1984* (Jerusalem, 1985).

20. For analysis and discussions of the respective programs, see *Estudios Judaicos en Universidades Latinoamericanas*, Haim Avni, Redactor, Florinda Goldberg, Asistente de Redacción (Jerusalem, 1985). For examples of contemporary courses introduced in different extension departments, see broadsides in the University Resource Library: 1984 lecture courses introduced in Brazil at the Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo on Martin Buber, Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. In Uruguay, the newly established Catedra de

addition, Hebrew language chairs have been established in Colombia and in Panama.

While these academic situations are clearly of a diverse character, the trend in teaching contemporary Jewry is developing along modular patterns. I elaborate on developments in Mexico because the pilot project there clearly illustrates what can be accomplished when Jewish community interest, Jewish educational structures and continuing university studies are knitted together.

In preparation is a volume of syllabi detailing the course outlines of a three-year program at the Universidad Ibero-Americana entitled "Contemporary Jewish Realities in an Historical Perspective: A Modular Program for University Teaching," organized by the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization. The thirteen lecture courses described therein were designed and taught in Spanish by representative Israeli faculty of Bar Ilan, Haifa, Hebrew and Tel Aviv Universities. Two of the courses are taught by Judit Liwerant of the Department of Political Studies, National Autonomous University of Mexico.²¹ When we raised the possibility of giving courses in Jewish Civilization at the Universidad Ibero-Americana, we were told quite clearly that under no circumstances should we expect accreditation and that, at best, a few courses could be offered in the extension department. We accepted; and the success of the pilot project has been so marked that, in the Fall of 1985, we received full academic agreement to offer a program of specialization in

Estudios Judaicos by Prof. Manuel Tenenbaum on the subject, *Los Grandes Procesos de la Historia Judía Contemporánea (Siglos XIX y XX)*.

21. Since this experiment was pathbreaking in every way, and until the detailed syllabi are published, a list of the subjects and lectures will help illustrate how contemporary themes were woven into the overall program. *Introduction to the Study of Jewish History* (Dr. David Bankier, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 classes); *Introduction to Jewish Philosophy* (Prof. Shalom Rosenberg, Dept. of Jewish Thought, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 classes); *Biblical Values and Modern Jewish Society* (Prof. Benjamin Kedar, Dept. of Biblical Studies, Haifa University — 32 classes); *Exile and Emigration of the Jewish People* (Prof. Haim Avni, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 hours); *The Impact of Sephard in Jewish History* (Dr. Joseph Kaplan, Dept. of Jewish History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 classes); *Ashkenazi Culture and its Presence in Jewish Life* (Dr. Chava Turniansky, Dept. of Yiddish, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 hours); *Stratification of Jews in Different Types of Society* (Dr. Joseph Hodara, Dept. of Sociology, Bar Ilan University — 32 hours); *History of the Jewish National Movement* (Lic. Judit Liwerant, Dept. of Political Studies, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México — 32 hours); *History of the State of Israel* (Prof. Shlomo Ben Ami, Dept. of History, Tel Aviv University — 32 hours); *From Modern Antisemitism to Anti-Zionism* (Dr. David Bankier, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 hours); *Center and Diaspora in the Life of the Jewish People* (Prof. Haim Avni, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem — 32 classes); *Research Seminar: Jews in Mexico and Latin America* (Lic. Judit Liwerant, Dept. of Political Studies, National Autonomous University of Mexico); *Teachers Seminar: Philosophical and Pedagogical Application of Studied Topics of Jewish Education* (Mr. Daniel Feinstein, Jerusalem Fellows and Melton Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Jewish Studies on a post-graduate level which will be coordinated with regular M.A. studies at Ibero-Americana University. Academic accreditation for the courses of the pilot project has been obtained from the Hebrew University and it is expected that other Israeli universities will join. Now that we are in the process of obtaining formal recognition for this pilot teaching and publication program also in other Mexican universities, an important step forward has been taken for the whole Latin American university scene.

United States and Canada

The study of Judaism and classical Hebraic culture in North American universities has a time-honored history, yet the efflorescence of Jewish Studies in recent decades could hardly have been anticipated. Today, a wide range of programs exists, from the one-man *Kol-bo* factotum to "mini-college" departments in universities with a large enrollment.²² Regrettably, quality does not always match quantity. It should be added that the need for higher standards of scholarship and instruction is regularly acknowledged in discussions of the Association for Jewish Studies.

Concurrently, courses in contemporary Jewish civilization have emerged dramatically on the academic scene — also in an unanticipated fashion. Undoubtedly, this is part of the Jewish Studies expansion but not always intrinsic to it, as we shall see. It is impossible here to present a comprehensive statement on the present state of the subject, but several sample studies will help to explain the nature of this new growth as well as the attendant problems.

In the mid-seventies, when we first discerned the substantial number of university courses on Jewish subjects in varied disciplines and departments in the United States and Canada, we undertook a preliminary inquiry into the evolving fields. At that time, we received responses from 61 colleges and universities covering some 200 courses. 37 of these institutions listed courses in the general disciplines (e.g. history, sociology, literature); 17 offered courses in Contemporary Jewry in the framework of Judaic, or Jewish Studies programs. That survey included responses from five Catholic universities, indicating that Contemporary Jewry was being taught in denominational institutions also in the United States, an aspect which had come to the fore in other regions in universities that do not have large Jewish student enrollment.

Of major interest in the first sample was the sequence of offerings in the surveyed institutions. Courses on the American Jewish Community were most prevalent, followed closely by studies in the Holocaust, and then followed by Jewish Literature and Thought (in translation), Modern Jewish History, Israel and the Middle East. Zionism as a separate course topic was very low on the list. These initial findings remained unpub-

22. As an example of the latter, see Robert Chazan's comprehensive Report on *Jewish Studies Within the City University of New York*, July 1985.

lished because we were not at all certain whether, on the basis of our limited evidence, we were recording a passing phase or a revealing trend.

Our second survey, undertaken in 1985 and now based on an analysis of catalogues and syllabi, indicates clearly that a new field of Contemporary Jewish Studies is, indeed, maturing and seems now to be a permanent feature of university curricula in the United States and Canada. Contemporary Jewish Civilization courses are now taught in the following academic departments, in addition to Jewish Studies: Demography, English, Ethnic Studies, Hebrew History, Linguistics, Literature, Near Eastern Studies, Political Science, Religion, Slavic and Oriental Languages and Literature, and Sociology.²³

Analytical comparison of these frameworks reveals interesting options. Most Jewish Studies programs have a growing proportion of courses in Hebrew language and literature, modern-contemporary Jewish history and the sociology of the Jews.²⁴ Another context for contemporary Jewish studies is provided by interdepartmental courses in such areas as Jewish intellectual and social history, literature, political science, and religion. Innovative options appear under the rubric of Literature in Translation, with specialization in modern Hebrew Literature, Israeli Literature and Yiddish Literature.²⁵ An interesting example is a course given in the department of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University, "Jewish Humanities in the 20th Century" — an interdisciplinary study of the novel, short story, drama, music, film and arts of the 20th century as they have reflected the experiences, preoccupations and contributions of the Jews.²⁶

While the preceding description and analysis apply to North American universities generally, special note should be taken of the situation in Canada, as described in university bulletins. The most extensive clusters

23. An example of the multi-disciplinary and inter-departmental approach can be gleaned from the SUNY-Binghamton program "housed primarily in the Departments of Classical and Near Eastern Studies, History, with other members in English, Music, Philosophy, Political Science and Sociology." Of all the courses offered in Fall 1984 and Spring 1985 (at SUNY-Binghamton as well as at SUNY-Buffalo), the preponderant number is in topics of Contemporary Jewry.

24. Cf. the catalogue listings of Judaic Studies programs at the American University, University of Cincinnati, Columbia University, University of Connecticut, California State University, Kent State University (which has a Jewish Studies minor in the Ethnic Studies program), Lafayette College (all eight courses offered in the Judaic Studies clusters are in the contemporary field), Lehigh University, University of La Verne (California), University of Massachusetts (Amherst), Los Angeles Valley College, listing nine required courses in its Jewish Studies minor, seven of which are in Contemporary Jewry, while all recommended courses are in contemporary topics, Rutgers University, Smith College.

25. Cf. the 1984-5 University bulletins of Brandeis, Hofstra, Michigan, Princeton, Roosevelt, SUNY-Buffalo, West Virginia and Wheaton. Also the program at the University of Pittsburgh where the Jewish Studies courses appear in the departments of Religion and Russian and East European Studies.

26. 1985 Catalogue.

of courses in Contemporary Jewry are at the universities of McGill, Toronto, and York, followed by Concordia University, University of Manitoba, Carlton University and Dawson College. [At the French-teaching Université de Montréal, virtually all of the courses are in Contemporary Jewry.²⁷] Knowledge of the proclivities of the instructors in these institutions helps us better to understand the relative placement of courses on Yiddish Literature and Language, Jewish Thought, Holocaust and Sephardic Judaism.

In rounding out the North American study, brief mention should be made of Judaica publications put out by university presses — another manifestation of the increasing penetration of Jewish Studies into North American institutions. For the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to review the trends of the ten leading university Judaica publications (1970-1980) in the order suggested by Amnon Zipin: State University of New York, University of Chicago, Wayne State, Yale, Princeton, University of California, Columbia, Associated University Presses, Harvard, and Oxford. That comparison, and subsequent lists published in the past five years, clearly substantiates the conclusion that there is a parallel between the number of publications by the Presses and the growing number of courses in Contemporary Jewry, a remarkable development in itself.²⁸

Implications

Our *tour d'horizon* of the present state of Contemporary Jewish Studies reflects the rapid extension in the field as well as differing emphases. In fact, however, the prominence of courses on the contemporary period has brought about a new quality in Jewish Studies generally. But what is the nature of the qualitative impact? What are some of the special problems inherent in this new growth? How can the positive elements be reinforced even as the weaknesses are mitigated?

One clue can be found in faculty and student motivation. In our mid-seventies survey referred to earlier, the respective interests of students and faculty were analyzed. When we asked instructors what factor was most responsible for the introduction of their courses in Contemporary Jewish Studies, the largest number responded: *personal interest*. And when we asked these same instructors to rank in order of importance their estimate of the motivation of students taking the courses in Contemporary Jewish Studies — out of seven options ranging from scholarly interest to vocation — the preponderant response was: *to explore personal religious and ethnic identity*.

These particular attitude responses may not be conclusive in the cur-

27. See Études Juives: Université de Montréal, description des cours, 1984-1985.

28. Amnon Zipin, "Judaica from American University Presses," *Jewish Book Annual*, vol. 42, 1984-1985, 5745, pp. 172-182. See also Salamon Faber, "Judaica Production of University Presses," *Ibid.*, vol. 28, 1970-71, pp. 32-40.

rent situation, but they do point to one of the most serious issues confronting those who would want to advance the teaching of Judaism and Jews, contemporary or otherwise, on the campus. That is a troublesome issue which cuts to the heart of the academic enterprise: the tension between university goals of knowledge and scholarship, and Jewish group goals of identification and commitment. There is no gainsaying that we are dealing with two legitimate purposes, and we need to find a solution to this dilemma. Otherwise, sound academic growth can too easily be distended.

What, then, is needed to deepen and advance the teaching of Contemporary Jewish Civilization in universities?

First — *Conceptualization*. Many of the “mother” fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences are undergoing reformulation. Contemporary Jewish Studies are still at the stage of basic definition and formulation in periodization, methodology and substantive themes.

Second — *Research*. In the past two decades, an abundance of specialized studies has appeared, primarily in the disciplines of Contemporary History and Sociology. Considerable gaps exist, however, not only in basic data, but also in indispensable interpretative analyses. Without gradual and imaginative exploration of uncharted areas, we shall be unable to probe the forces which are transforming the Jewish world in our times.

Third — *Pedagogic Literature*. The combination of research and university teaching is indispensable, but publication of research papers is not enough. Even the best faculty personnel remain inadequate without a library of materials geared to the classroom situation. Regrettably, appropriate pedagogic literature is lacking. Not even one comprehensive textbook is available on Contemporary Jewry. The fact that other subjects in Judaica suffer from this shortcoming is no consolation.

Fourth — *New Forms of International Academic Cooperation*. At a time when common issues in education are being dealt with in universal terms, it is not too difficult to envisage how the best national programs tested on different continents can become internationalized. Actual transmission of facts relating to regional contexts is a goal not to be underestimated, but it is essential to stress world-wide intercommunication of ideas and interdisciplinary knowledge, as well as meetings between university personalities, comparison of experiences and evaluation of self-perceptions.

All four desiderata lead to the basic problem of Contemporary Jewish Studies, namely the chasm between local and global perceptions. In teaching Contemporary Jewry — the total spectrum of Jewish communities throughout the world — one must deal with at least with three major categories: Jewish communities in their respective majority cultures; inner Jewish life, traditions and institutions; interrelationships of world Jewish communities with one another and with Israel as the center of the Jewish People.

Analysis of the research and pedagogic bibliographies, with very few

exceptions, reveals that satisfactory literature exists only in the first category, and then not in all major countries. The materials assigned for the most part relate to the resident communities, and thus lead to research and instructional fragmentation. This is a dominant feature of such instruction in the United States, where Contemporary Jewry, it seems, is synonymous with American Jewry.

While I have not dealt with teaching of Contemporary Jewry in Israeli schools, I deem it pertinent to indicate that the same danger lurks in that system, as is evident from the manner in which Zionism and the History of the New Yishuv are presented. Whether these subjects are taught through biographies, documentaries or institutional histories, a crucial dimension has been generally ignored: an all-inclusive approach which emphasizes the study of the Jewish community in Eretz Israel not only within local parameters, but also in terms of its mutual relationships with the Jewish People throughout the world. After all, Israeli society is, at its core, an ingathering of disparate traditions and communities. From a purely methodological view, one cannot grasp the unique aspects of the Jewish community's evolution in Eretz Israel and its development into a national entity without considering the constructive interaction between the Yishuv and diasporic communities in all their diversity, including non-Zionist groups.

In teaching contemporary Jewish civilization, it has always been my position that only through global orientation, from various stances and regional situations, can we focus on the deeper socio-educational forces that motivate and shape the Jewish People. Basically, this approach helps us to examine the Jewish condition from the perspective of our times, and also to study the salient issues confronting world society.

This ought to be the guiding principle. For the rest — let us go forward and study.

Some Changing Aspects of Jewish Scholarship

JACOB HABERMAN

For My Teacher and Master,
Professor Salo W. Baron,
On his 90th Birthday

THE OBJECTIVES AND METHODS FEASIBLE TO Jewish scholarship and to people entering this field have changed dramatically in the century and a half since Jewish learning and culture first became generally recognized as subjects of objective scholarship. These changes reflect the profound revolution in the roles played in society by the Jewish community and by individual Jews during this period. In this paper some of these changes are surveyed, and their methodological implications for practicing Jewish scholars (as distinguished from scholars of other backgrounds engaged in Jewish studies) are considered.

Objective Jewish scholarship, properly the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* ("Science of Judaism"), began in Germany.¹ Its inception is usually dated to 1818, which saw the publication of Leopold Zunz's essay, "Something about Rabbinic Literature," and to 1819, the date of the establishment of the *Verein für die Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* ("Society for the Culture and Science of the Jews"). The background of the early pioneers in the field is strikingly uniform. They all obtained an intense Jewish education early in life, while their secular education and, hence, their ability to interpret their background in terms of objective scholarship, came later during study in a modern university. Their careers thus embodied the ambivalence, indeed the conflict, which since has run through Jewish scholarship. The natural instinct of the Jew with traditional religious training, who also is qualified as a scholar according to the criteria of secular learning, is to continue his old studies in a new social context, usually also in a new form. But society and the academic establishment, in particular, apply pressures which encourage the Jewish scholar to abandon his Jew-

1. A good discussion of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* for the English reader, with bibliographical references, may be found in the editor's introduction to Alfred Jospe, ed., *Studies in Jewish Thought* (Detroit, 1981). Various representative viewpoints by different authorities are translated, with a brief introduction, in Chapter 5 of the sourcebook, Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World* (New York, 1980); see also the essays in the Jospe volume, especially the second one, by Ismar Elbogen, at pp. 26-37.

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ish identity at the same time that he begins to treat Judaism as a scholarly subject.

The pioneers of Jewish studies in the early nineteenth century had a fragile and tenuous attachment to Judaism and no future in German academic life if they continued to identify themselves as Jews. The president of the *Kulturverein*, Eduard Gans, a gifted young Hegelian, and some of the *Verein's* leading members, soon apostacized to Christianity. Zunz himself, the "Grand Old Man" of the new learning as he was later to be called, planned to convert to Christianity to gain his "admission ticket" to an academic career. (The phrase is that of Heinrich Heine, also a member of the *Verein*, who actually did take this step.) Only the earnest entreaties of his teacher and mentor, Samuel Meyer Ehrenberg, prevented Zunz from doing so.²

The same telling circumstances obtain in our own century, as may be demonstrated from the life of the great Harry A. Wolfson of Harvard. He studied in the Slobodka Yeshivah in Lithuania and, subsequently, in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Seminary on New York's Lower East Side. After being advised that he was too introverted to make a good rabbi, he served as an untenured instructor at Harvard. When asked (hypothetically) whether he would accept a position at a small college, with the condition that he join the local church, Wolfson replied that he "would be willing to attend services at the local church" provided that there were no Jewish house of worship in the community. In later life he occasionally conducted services in the Chapel of the Harvard Divinity School.³

The life predicament of the modern Jewish scholar differs accidentally but not essentially (in the Aristotelian senses) from the examples just reviewed. Because Jews today can achieve status in most professions without apostasy, they are relieved from putting their religious identity on the line when they make a career choice, but that very freedom creates a new tension. The Jew who is making a career choice among the scholarly professions has to consider his self-interest, and the harsh truth is that science, medicine, and law offer more in the way of material reward and recognition from the general society than does Jewish scholarship. This has two intensely practical implications.

First, since the early nineteenth century, Jewish studies have been centrifugal, in the sense that many of the greatest Jewish minds have applied their energies outside the Jewish community proper and, therefore, the transmission of Jewish culture within the community has been weakened. In Germany, as has been mentioned, the development of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* occasioned an outpouring of talent from the Jewish community into the German scholarly community during the

2. See Nahum N. Glatzer, ed., *Leopold and Adelheid Zunz: An Account in Letters 1815-1885* (London, 1958), pp. xvi, 13, and 38.

3. Lewis S. Feuer, "Recollections of Harry Austryn Wolfson," *American Jewish Archives*, vol. 28 (April, 1976): p. 46.

1820s. By the end of that generation (c. 1860) Germany had well-nigh exhausted its supply of German-Jewish scholars, and from then until the disruption of the Jewish community in the 1930s, German Jewry had to rely on Eastern European immigrants to keep its scholarly tradition alive. When, in turn, the great Jewish centers of Eastern Europe were destroyed during the Second World War, even this became no longer feasible. In our own day, the seats of Jewish learning are to be found in the United States and Israel. Jewish culture has been able to thrive in tolerant communities, but that toleration has continued to take its toll of Jewish talent. The Freuds, the Einsteins, and the Frankfurters have applied their talents to disciplines which benefit the larger community. There is, of course, no calculus to determine what these thinkers could have done for Jewish studies had they chosen to enter that field, still less to weigh that possibility against the immense value of their achieved work.

The second implication is that he who today does elect to engage in Jewish scholarship must realistically prepare to produce work of a scope viable in terms of the needs, forms, and circumstances of the modern scholarly community. No Jewish scholar today could consider devoting his career to a magisterial *summa* of Jewish law, history, or literature. He must, therefore, pick his ground carefully, considering the relevant needs of Jewish scholarship and of general scholarship, as well as his own interests and capacities.

It should be said first and foremost that the necessity of targeting subjects in this way makes it all the more important for the scholar to be sure of the propriety of his methodology. He must assume that his every methodological decision will be noted by a large and discerning audience, not all of whom are Jewish, nor even necessarily interested in Jewish studies (narrowly speaking), since his work will inevitably involve other specialized disciplines. It is axiomatic, therefore, that the sole aim of his research must be nothing else than pure undogmatic scholarship. Other disciplines acknowledge this as a familiar ideal, but in Jewish studies it is a conclusion compelled by bitter historical experience.

Zunz and the founders of the German school of the New Learning did not share this axiom, but the event proved that there was little merit, if any, to the claim of beneficent social and political side-effects from Jewish scholarship. Originally, it was hoped that the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* would reveal the true character of Judaism to the uninformed German world, and thus secure the respect and good will of the Germans for their Jewish fellow citizens. In his introduction to *The Liturgic Addresses of the Jews* (1832), Zunz links the general neglect and ignorance of Jewish literature with the inferior status of the Jewish community. A knowledge of the Jewish spiritual heritage, he asserts, will encourage "the winning of the favor of those in power and the good will of sensible men" for granting to Jews the same civil rights and liberties which the rest of the nation enjoys. Our experience of the twentieth century *dénouement* of German thinking

about the Jews ineluctably gives this argument a pathos and naivete which its contemporary proponents could not have foreseen. Theoretically, the possibility of using scholarship as a medium of social change on behalf of a minority, assuming the general society to be reasonably liberal, remains open. The emergence of "Black Studies" as an academic discipline in the United States in recent years is a case in point. Pragmatically, when a writer on Jewish scholarship attempts this special pleading, he necessarily invokes the shadow of Auschwitz and his work is blighted (even if not intrinsically distorted) by the pathos that necessarily attaches to any such reference.

As Gershom Scholem points out, what may be termed the "museumist" approach to Jewish studies is just another aspect of such apologetics. When German-Jewish intellectuals assumed that Jews were to be assimilated into the German body politic, it was reasonable to assume further that the principal task left for them was "to give a decent burial to the literary remains of the Jewish past," as the octogenarian polymath, Moritz Steinschneider, once told a youthful student.⁴ Zunz himself regarded the Science of Judaism as a "swan song rather than as the dawn of a new era in Jewish life," and he was convinced that, by 1918, it would be well-nigh impossible to obtain a Hebrew book.⁵

Zunz consistently and properly held that the results of the new scholarship could have no application to the conduct of life (even though, in practice, he was not always able to conform rigorously to this demanding position). In a footnote to his essay of 1818, he stated that the study of Jewish literature was not intended "to offer a norm [or direction] for our own judgment."⁶ The event showed him to be correct. Nineteenth century scholars who turned to Jewish literature for guidance came back from their studies with exactly those views and preconceptions which they had brought with them in the first place: Samuel Holdheim his radical reform views, Abraham Geiger his somewhat more moderate reform opinions, Zacharias Frankel his positivist historical standpoint, and David Hoffmann his advocacy of the unity of the Written and Oral Torah.⁷

4. See Gershom Scholem, "The Science of Judaism — Then and Now," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), pp. 304-317. This is a more moderate version of an essay entitled "Reflections on the Science of Judaism," (Hebrew), first published in *Luah Haarez* (Tel Aviv, 1944), pp. 94-112, and reprinted (Hebrew) in *Explications and Implications* (Tel Aviv, 1975), pp. 385-403. The Steinschneider story is quoted from Gotthold Weil, *Jüdische Rundschau*, 12, no. 6 (February 8, 1907): 54. See also the perceptive study by Robert Gordis, "Jewish Learning and Jewish Existence, Retrospect and Prospect," *The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 6* (New York, 1963), pp. 17 ff.

5. Leopold Zunz, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin, 1875), I, 4. See also Luitpold Wallach, *Liberty and Letters — The Thoughts of Leopold Zunz* (London, 1959), pp. 18-19.

6. Zunz, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 5, quoted by Nahum N. Glatzer, "The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Studies," in *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History*, ed. A. Altmann (Cambridge, 1964), p. 29.

7. Cf. Michael A. Meyer, "Jewish Religious Reform and Wissenschaft des Judentums — The Positions of Zunz, Geiger and Frankel," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, XVI (1971), pp. 19-41.

Of course, any apologetic aim in a work of scholarship also does a disservice to scholarly method and creates a justified distrust in the results claimed. A sensitivity to such mistrust is shown at the end of the first chapter of Moritz Lazarus' *The Ethics of Judaism*. The learned author and quondam university rector there found it necessary solemnly to swear, "I declare, before God and man, that I will not advance a thought in this work which I do not conscientiously believe was born of the spirit of Judaism."⁸

The nondogmatic premise of objective scholarship has two implications which are familiar to all scholars in the humanities, but which are particularly significant for those approaching objective scholarship from a background of traditional Jewish studies. It is no exaggeration to call them the major disputed assumptions of the new Jewish learning. First, objective scholarship is intolerant of received opinion and, as a matter of practice, subjects all propositions to essentially the same tests of verification, no matter where those propositions originate. This necessarily conflicts with practice in Jewish law and religion, where *some* propositions must be regarded as received and dogmatic. It does not save the situation to say that those propositions are verifiable anyway, or even that they have been verified. The practicing Jew is expected to accept these propositions on faith as well as on intellectual assent, and it is disturbing for him to question his fideistic understanding of them.

Second, objective scholarship assumes that social values are relative and that there are no absolutely valid judgments. In particular, it assumes that values change over time and, hence, that the propositions of the past can be fully understood only by mastering the contexts of the past. In this view the sacred texts themselves become (some would say "merely") expressions of a moment in the development of society. However significant that expression may be when made, and however significant a subsequent interpretation or understanding of the original expression may be, at no point is it possible to assign an absolute truth value either to the original proposition or to its contemporary footnote. Since practicing Jews regard propositions of Jewish law as guides for their actual behavior and as aids to their consciences, it is necessary for them to believe that these propositions have intrinsic validity. They are willing to concede that, at a given moment in time, they may have misinterpreted or misapplied the propositions, but they have to assume that, by constant restudy and reinterpretation, they are moving towards a demonstrably better understanding of these propositions and that their moral lives are, therefore, improving in the face of new circumstances in this process. Therefore, the propositions or, rather, the ultimate realizable version of them, must be perfect and perfectly valid.⁹

8. Moritz Lazarus, *The Ethics of Judaism*, tr. Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia, 1900), p. 105.

9. The analysis in the two preceding paragraphs is based, in part, on Bernard J. Bamberger's study, "The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Scholarship," *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook*, vol. 42 (1932), pp. 209-210.

The traditional view has been well summarized by Gershom Scholem:

... Truth is given once and for all, and it is laid down with precision. Fundamentally, truth merely needs to be transmitted. The originality of the exploring scholar has two aspects. In his spontaneity, he develops and explains that which was transmitted at Sinai, no matter whether it was always known or whether it was forgotten and had to be rediscovered. The effort of the seeker after truth consists not in having new ideas but rather in subordinating himself to the continuity of the tradition of the divine word and in laying open what he receives from it in the context of his own time. In other words: Not system but *commentary* is the legitimate form through which truth is approached.¹⁰

In their textbook on logic, Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel offer as a paradigm of an historical explanation which is established “beyond a reasonable doubt” the theory of great F. W. Maitland as to why Elizabeth I adopted the style, “Defender of the Faith, *and so forth*.”¹¹ The latter phrase, Maitland argues, was a deliberate equivocation, designed to enable Elizabeth to avoid committing herself among the competing parties in Europe. She intended subsequently to explain the phrase either as her assertion of headship of the English Church, or as a convenient flourish to refer to numerous minor titles, depending upon whether she would find herself making common cause with Protestant powers or submitting to the Pope. But even the “reasonable doubt” standard, difficult as it may be to attain in the social sciences, is not comparable to the relatively precise and consistent statements possible in logic, mathematics, or the sciences subject to mathematical description. There are certain tacit assumptions even in Maitland’s explanation. In making her decision, Elizabeth may have been motivated by considerations of symbolic loyalty or private family feeling of which she herself may have been unaware. The ambiguity that Maitland reads into the phrase may not be precisely the same one that Elizabeth intended, nor again the same one that her contemporaries read. Granting that Elizabeth adopted the style for reasons of policy, the policy that she contemplated may not have been the one that Maitland inferred — for example, she may never seriously have entertained the possibility of submission to the Pope, but only hoped that some of her subjects would be led to believe (as was Maitland) that she was entertaining it. Alternatively, she may have adopted the title, not as an evasive measure, but as a calculated gesture of defiance.¹²

10. Gershom Scholem, “Tradition and Commentary as Religious Categories in Judaism,” *JUDAISM*, XV (1966): 26. This essay has been reprinted with additions under the title, “Revelations and Tradition as Religious Categories in Judaism,” in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), pp. 282-304.

11. Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (New York, 1934), p. 342. See F. W. Maitland, “Elizabethan Gleanings,” in *Collected Papers* (London, 1911), III, pp. 157-165.

12. Cf. E. Nagel, *The Structure of Science* (New York, 1961), pp. 552-554.

Unlike the physical sciences, the social sciences do not provide etiological descriptions of observed phenomena. Rather, they establish models which make the phenomena comprehensible and, hence, useful to a distant observer whose symbolic frames of reference may be inconsistent with, or actively antagonistic to, the frames employed by the people who are observed. The social sciences thus “translate” the observee for the observer; this is a meaningful transaction even when the observee and the observer are the same person (as in psychology). To this extent, Jewish scholarship is normally and necessarily a translation from Jewish frames of reference to those of observers, even when the observer is a devout Jew acting in his scholarly capacity. This translation is not necessarily value-free, but neither is it rhetorical or polemical. It distorts only to the extent necessary consistent with an intention merely to explain.

The Jew with a strong commitment to his religion, however, is ever in danger of slipping from scholarly method to apologetics. Since the mote in the other man's eye is always more apparent than the beam in one's own, it will be more fruitful to examine not the committed Jew apologizing for his position, but the committed anti-Semite stooping to apologize for *his* position. Again Maitland affords an example, a striking one precisely because his general reputation for scholarly care and responsibility is so high. His essay, “The Deacon and the Jewess,” written just about a century ago, treats of the right to execute or punish a heretic under British law.¹³ The learned author cites as a precedent the case of an unnamed deacon who converted to Judaism, on account of a Jewess, in 1222 and was at once delivered to the secular power — in reality to a lynch mob — to be summarily burned at the stake. Maitland raises the question of whether there was anything reprehensible in putting the cleric to death. “The case is good law,” he answers. “It is a precedent to be followed when occasion shall require” (p. 253). The only justification offered for this assertion in support of judicial murder in these circumstances is essentially that “everybody says so” (except that Maitland says it in his enchanting and masterly prose).

It is hard to understand how a person of even ordinary judgment and discretion, not to mention a Maitland, could take a patent atrocity to be a reasoned legal precedent. The fact that this account happens to have been on the books for centuries (it dates from the seventh year after Magna Carta) does not alone make it a case of any authority. The unfortunate deacon may, indeed, have “piled sin on sin” from the point of view of Christian theology, but he committed no crime. There existed at the time no law or statute binding on a British subject that would have denied the deacon the right to convert to Judaism or to marry anyone he desired. In Maitland's analysis the case becomes “the main, almost the only authority,

13. The essay first appeared in the *Law Quarterly Review* in 1886. It is reprinted in Ray D. Hanson, ed., *Landmarks of Law* (Boston, 1963), pp. 249-260. (Page references herein are to this edition.)

for holding that without help from any statute, English law can burn a heretic, or, at least, an apostate" (p. 249).

Realistically, the Jewish scholar should not hope to avoid value judgments in addressing Jewish subjects. Rather, he should seek strategically either to define his subject, or to approach it, preferably both, in such a way that his anticipated prejudices will not affect the result of his studies. With respect to this problem, scholarly history records some brilliant successes. The late Rabbi Professor K. Kahana Kagan presents in his book, *Three Great Systems of Jurisprudence* (London, 1955), a convincing but dispassionate demonstration that the Jewish legal system is conceptually superior to others. His central thesis is that the common law, as well as the Roman law and the continental civil law, had to develop dualistic systems of "law" and "equity" because these systems are not founded on justice, and their officials were not able to subordinate the development of their respective bodies of law to the concept of justice. Other interests, for example the promotion of certainty in the law, the maintenance of the settled expectations of the parties to litigation or, more recently, the allocation of losses to the so-called "deep pocket," were frequently given prior consideration. Cases would arise in which the expedient, established rule could not conscientiously be applied, so equity, a system of jurisprudence collateral to, and in some respects independent of, "law" had to soften the harsher rules of the common law. Jewish law, on the other hand, could afford to be monist, since in that system law and justice are harmonized. The thesis may be open to challenge, but it is based on undogmatic, dispassionate analysis.

Professor Hyman Levy's demonstration of the presence of anti-Semitism in Stalin's Soviet Union can be ranked with the best of Maitland's historical studies. Remarkably, Levy made this argument not as an armchair analyst, but in the course of an "existential" situation in which he was vitally and personally involved. He was born in Edinburgh and brought up in a traditional Jewish household with parents who were Zionists. He, himself, became a distinguished mathematician and historian of science. From the 1930s through the early 1950s he was a leading member of the British Communist party, but after visiting Russia in 1957 he became disillusioned and critical of the Soviet attitude towards Jews and Jewish culture. His colleagues accused him of being a turncoat and expelled him from the Party, whereupon he was obliged to present a short and conclusive justification for his position. He was able to do so with an incisive statistical argument of such impeccable objectivity that even the skilled Communist polemicists could not challenge it.¹⁴

14. Levy's proof was based on the facts of the so-called "Doctors' Plot" of 1953, supposedly hatched by thirteen eminent Moscow physicians, nine of whom (five, according to other accounts) "happened to be Jewish." These doctors had allegedly conspired to kill a number of prominent Soviet leaders and thus to prepare the way for a coup. When placed on trial, the doctors "confessed" to the 1949 "murder" of the two Soviet leaders then closest to Stalin.

It is not always possible to substitute human beings for marbles in an urn, as Levy did, but a research scholar would do well to develop a methodology which will enable him or her to entertain evidence in an open and undogmatic manner. A good example of such a methodology is Rabbi Mordechai Breuer's tentative theory to reconcile the concepts of traditional Jewish faith with the problems raised by modern Biblical criticism. This is a field in which the temptation to engage in polemics is, unfortunately, very grave.

Mordechai Breuer, a nephew of the late Agudah leader, Isaac Breuer, and a descendent of Samson Raphael Hirsch, is a rabbi of unimpeachable Orthodoxy who, for a number of years, was the director of a traditional Yeshivah (Talmudic academy) in Israel. A man of wide culture, he has chosen to work in an area where narrow views and injudicious approaches are frequent. Intrinsically, as a matter of objective scholarship, there is nothing in the "Higher Criticism" to suggest this tendency. But the examination of the Bible as a historical text implicates the major disputed assumptions of Jewish objective scholarship which we already have referred to. Just as Jews tend to assume, on faith, the validity of certain propositions, so do they assume the correctness of the text in which those propositions are embodied. At the same time, otherwise nondogmatic non-Jewish scholars, being aware of these issues and of their importance to Jews, appear to have allowed themselves to use this scholarly subject as an outlet for methodologically irrelevant anti-Semitic feelings. Biblical criticism, especially as it developed in Germany, had a strong anti-Jewish bias, and Wellhausen and his followers often used language of mocking irreverence (or at least language which has been thus perceived)

The doctors confessed that the murders were committed in connection with Zionist-Imperialist agents in a "conspiracy" involving the CIA. Shortly after Stalin's death, *Pravda* announced that the doctors had not been guilty and had been freed. Those using "impermissible means of investigation" had been arrested. The whole affair, it was admitted, (ultimately, even by Nikita Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress) was actually a conspiracy against the doctors themselves, and not *by* the doctors against leading political figures, as originally had been alleged.

Levy undertook to prove *statistically* — that is, as objectively as was possible under the circumstances — that the frame-up of the doctors had anti-Semitic motives. Levy maintained that it was statistically improbable that a selection of thirteen doctors from among the statistical universe of doctors practicing in Soviet Russia would include nine Jews. The probability that this could occur from a truly random selection was insignificant. Jews constitute less than 1% of the Russian population. The probability that any given doctor is Jewish is, therefore, 1 in 100. Even if we assume that Jews become doctors ten times more frequently than do non-Jews, the probability that a given doctor is Jewish is still only 1 in 10. Using calculations found in any elementary textbook of statistics and probability, Levy concludes that the odds of choosing thirteen doctors, nine of whom happen to be Jewish, are two million to one.

See Hyman Levy, *Jews and the National Question* (New York, 1958), pp. 6-7. Levy assumes further that Jews are dispersed equally throughout Russia, and are not concentrated in Moscow where the crimes were allegedly committed. However, Levy's figures allow a sufficient margin of safety in other respects so that the outcome is still valid.

If only five of the thirteen doctors were Jews, as an alternative account of the plot suggested, the odds against the claimed result would be 200 to 1.

towards cherished Jewish beliefs.¹⁵ Breuer, however, is also troubled by the fact that the Orthodox opponents of Biblical criticism see it as their duty to show that every theory propounded by Wellhausen is false, and that every single emendation proposed by the critics is wrong, even if that emendation demonstrably reflects the original Hebrew text underlying the known ancient versions of the Bible. He finds an ill-concealed *ad hominem* polemic on both sides. One Jewish scholar, for example, maintained that in all instances the text underlying the ancient versions is either a corruption of the Massoretic text or a conscious emendation of it. Breuer rightly characterizes the conservative Biblical scholars as “men of little faith” (*Ketane amanah*, see *Sotah* 48b, *Arakhin* 15a, etc.; cf. Mt. 6:30, Luke 12:28).

For a working methodological hypothesis, he avails himself of Kant’s distinction between noumena, or things in themselves, and phenomena, or things as experienced, to distinguish the transcendental, suprahistorical, primordial Torah from the historical document (i.e., the original Hebrew text) revealed to Moses.¹⁶ This hypothesis may not be universally acceptable, but it may be noted that variations of Kant’s distinction have been accepted by many scientists who have a philosophical bent. What is significant is that this hypothesis enabled Breuer to study various manuscripts of the Bible with an open mind or, in the words of T. H. Huxley, to sit down before fact as a little child and to give up every preconceived notion. In the years since the cited article was published, Breuer has written an important work on the Aleppo Codex, which Maimonides considered to be the definitive text of the Bible, and has also produced a new critical edition of the Bible.¹⁷

These examples suggest that, far from being insurmountable, the peculiar issues that confront the contemporary Jewish scholar may be both the motive and mechanism of the highest possible scholarly achievement and, hence, of the resolution of the conflicts that he confronts. What

15. See Solomon Goldman, *The Book of Books: An Introduction* (Philadelphia, 1948), Chapter 5, “The Dawn of Conscience,” pp. 68-103.

16. M. Breuer, “Faith and Knowledge in the Interpretation of Scripture,” in *Deoth: A Religious Academic Periodical*, nos. 11 and 12 (1960): 18-25 and 12-27 (Hebrew).

17. Nothing in the present essay is meant to suggest that responsible Biblical criticism necessarily doubts that much of the Pentateuchal legislation goes back to Moses. In comparison with other ancient Middle Eastern legislation, the Pentateuch contains both apodictic and casuistic law, whereas the other writings (e.g., the Code of Hammurabi) contain only casuistic law. See Albrecht Alt, *The Origins of Israelite Law* (1934), James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, 1969), pp. 159-188. This fact has led no less an authority than the late Professor William Foxwell Albright to conclude that many of these laws may well be Mosaic in origin. “Of course,” he states, “we cannot say how many of the apodictic laws actually emanate directly from Moses, but the fact that they cannot be paralleled from outside of Israel and that they were believed by different schools of traditional thought in Israel to go back to the time of Moses is sufficient indication that they are in accord with the movement which bears his name.” See W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore, 1967), p. 268; see also, H. Loewe’s monograph, *Mosaic Revelation* (London, 1939).

the scholar may first be tempted to view as a handicap becomes, in the fullness of experience, a virtue.

First, the selectivity which the pressures of modern scholarship impose on him should not be confused with, nor should they lead to, a narrowness of view. The professor of Jewish studies can lean upon the growing fabric of specialized work done in his and in related disciplines to orient himself to Judaic studies as a whole, and thus to understand the tasks immediately confronting his critical scholarship. An admirable example of such a supportive study is Richard S. Sarason's excellent monograph, "On the Use of Method in Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy."¹⁸ It surveys the work done in this field over the last 150 years and defines the tasks now confronting students of it. Sarason's work exemplifies one of the areas of scholarship which is a significant contribution of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Talmudists of the pre-*Wissenschaft* school often resisted the methods of the new learning as they applied to the Talmudic-rabbinic literature (with much justification, from their point of view),¹⁹ and were not interested in investigations of the liturgy, derisively

18. Richard S. Sarason's essay first appeared in William Scott Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* (Missoula, 1978), pp. 97-172; the paper also appears in the same form in Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Study of Ancient Judaism I: Mishnah, Midrash, Siddur* (New York, 1981), pp. 107-179. The latter volume has an additional essay by Sarason entitled "Recent Developments in the Study of Jewish Liturgy," pp. 180-187. This essay is of less importance, being devoted largely to one work. Sarason's assumption that historical-philological studies cannot take us back to a preliterate stage is not universally true. For example, philology can uncover the use of the mnemonic device of epanastrophe, or the figure of speech by which the last word of one sentence becomes the first word of the next. This figure occurs in various parts of the prayer-book, most notably in the Sabbath *Musaf kedushah*. For example, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His abode (*mimekomo*). / From His abode (*mimekomo*) He will turn in mercy. . . ." etc.

Professor Gordis calls my attention to the fact that a form of epanastrophe already occurs in such passages of the Bible as Ps. 121 and Is. 26:5-7.

19. See Louis Ginzberg, *Students, Scholars and Saints* (Philadelphia, 1928), p. 73: "No less an authority than Nöldeke remarks that 'we modern scholars who approach the Talmud as philologists and historians will always remain bunglers in this field of study.' This is the expert opinion of the greatest Semitist of modern times, who laid the foundation for the scientific study of the philology of the Talmud. Many profited by Nöldeke's contributions to Talmudic philology, but few followed his candid advice not to express opinions about the proper method of the study of the Talmud without knowing it. With all the short-comings of the mediaeval scholars, they knew the Talmud, and their great mastery of this branch of Jewish literature is the best proof that their model of study was essentially the right one." The voluminous, perhaps too voluminous, works of Professor Jacob Neusner do not require a revision of Professor Ginzberg's judgment. Most of Neusner's publications have come unnoticed and unobserved into the Jewish scholarly world. However, shortly before Professor Saul Lieberman's death, Professor Lieberman wrote a justifiably devastating review, in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 104 (1984): 315-319, of Neusner's translation of the Jerusalem Talmud, listing a series of egregious blunders and expressing his considered opinion that the right place for this mockery of a translation is the waste basket. (I have been credibly informed that Lieberman used admirable restraint, and the list of howlers could easily have been multiplied several times over.) In addition there have recently appeared two highly critical assessments of Neusner's work: Hyam Maccoby, "Jacob

referring to those engaged in its study as *Sidur lomdim* (prayer-book scholars). There are many areas of research in which it would be very desirable to have monographs of the quality of Sarason's.

Second, the Jewish scholar should keep in mind that the personal conflicts created by his duality (or plurality?) of vision are themselves a source of creativity and intellectual progress. It has frequently been observed that it is the marginal and alienated Jew who ultimately has exercised the greatest influence on modern thought and institutions. At the time of the Balfour Declaration, a friend of Thorstein Veblen's expressed the view that, in a Jewish homeland, where Jews would be free of the bans and taboos that prevail against them in the gentile world, the Jewish contribution to civilization would be accelerated. Veblen answered this contention in an essay, "The Intellectual Pre-Eminence of Jews in Modern Europe,"²⁰ which betrays a strong anti-Zionist and anti-religious bias, but which, nevertheless, carries a message for any Jew who looks beyond the immediate intellectual tradition of his religion. He notes that one of the great historical consequences of the French Revolution was the

Neusner's Mishnah," *Midstream*, vol. 30 (1984): 24-32, and Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Jacob Neusner, Mishnah, and Counter-Rabbinics," *Conservative Judaism*, vol. 37 (1983): 48-63. Neusner's rejoinder to these critiques in "The Mishnah and the Smudgepots," *Midstream*, vol. 31 (1985): 40-46, is far from reassuring. He now says that he did not want to reply to a dead man because "People do not reply to a lion after [his] death" (*Gittin* 83b), since this cannot be done with dignity and decency. I note, however, that this new-found solicitude does not extend to Lieberman's predecessor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Louis Ginzberg (who was considered an outstanding Talmudist even by staunchly Orthodox traditionalist scholars like Rabbi Chayyim Heller), whom Neusner castigates in a scathing and vociferous manner which is in singularly bad taste. The whole controversy is reminiscent of another Talmudic proverb regarding lions (= great scholars): "The lion you mentioned turns out to be a [mere] fox (*Bava Kamma* 117a).

If I may say so, in all sad sincerity and without offense, it seems that Mr. Neusner has meditated too much on the plain sense of the scripture, "I know more than all my teachers" (Ps. 119:99). I do seriously want to suggest that he reflect on the rabbinic interpretation of the same verse, i.e., "From all my teachers have I gained knowledge" (*Avot* 4:1), for, as the philosopher, Morris Raphael Cohen, once said, "The notion that we can dismiss the views of all previous thinkers surely leaves no basis for the hope that our own work will prove of any value to others" (*Reason and Nature*, p. x). Mr. Neusner is still a young man and he has been asking some intelligent questions. If, for the next few years, he would write less and think a little more — taking care that his thinking is not about his superiority over other scholars who are obviously superior to him — he might yet produce a magnificent work on the Talmudic-rabbinic writings.

20. Thorstein Veblen, "The Intellectual Pre-Eminence of Jews in Modern Europe," *Essays in Our Changing Order*, ed. Leon Ardzrooni (New York, 1934), pp. 219-231. (Page references in the present essay are to this edition.) Veblen's essay was first published in the *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 34 (March, 1919): 33-42. Veblen's thesis has been updated by John H. Davis in his introduction to *The Guggenheims: An American Epic* (New York, 1978), pp. 11-13.

The historian, Cecil Roth, has formulated Veblen's thesis in more traditional terms in his essay, "The Eternal Protestant," in *Personalities and Events in Jewish History* (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 69-77. However, Roth fails to account for the fact that the majority of the outstanding Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries repudiated the religion of their fathers.

intellectual emancipation of the Jews of the West. Because the newly *déraciné* Jew came to general European culture from a very distinct, even alien subculture, he was able to confront the issues of the general culture with an open mind. The intellectually gifted Jew secures immunity from intellectual stagnation, says Veblen,

at the cost of losing his secure place in the scheme of conventions into which he has been born, and . . . of finding no similarly secure place in the scheme of gentile conventions into which he is thrown. . . . He becomes a disturber of the intellectual peace, but only at the cost of becoming an intellectual way-faring man, a wanderer in the intellectual No Man's Land, seeking another place to rest, farther along the road, somewhere over the horizon. [Jewish intellectuals] are neither a complaisant nor a contented lot (p. 227).

The "uprooted" Jew does not uncritically accept the "intellectual prepossessions that are always standing over among the substantial citizens of the republic of learning." Thus, the Jew

is in a peculiar degree exposed to the unmediated facts of the current situation; and . . . takes his orientation from the run of the facts as he finds them, rather than from the traditional interpretation of analogous facts in the past (p. 229). . . . It appears to be only when the gifted Jew escapes from the cultural environment created and fed by the particular genius of his own people, only when he falls into the alien lines of gentile inquiry and becomes a naturalized, though hyphenate, citizen in the gentile republic of learning, that he comes into his own as a creative leader in the world's intellectual enterprise. It is by loss of allegiance, or at best by force of a divided allegiance to the people of his origin, that he finds himself in the vanguard of modern inquiry (pp. 225-6).²¹

21. By way of a footnote I would like to call attention to two interesting related theses by seminal thinkers: The explanation by Will Herberg for the return to religion among a segment of American-born and completely acculturated American Jews, and the answer given by my esteemed teacher, Professor Salo W. Baron to the question of whether Jews are a religion, ethnic group, or nation.

Herberg's formulation of the "dialectic of third generation interest" is the cornerstone of his analysis of American Jewry and of Judaism in America. Using insights from Marcus Hansen, Herberg posits "Hansen's Law," which may be stated as follows: "What the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember." The third generation of American Jewry, coming into its own at a date when mass immigrations from Europe, generally, and immigration of Jews, in particular, had ceased, tried to recover its ancestral cultural heritage. But what the third generation specifically remembers is not the foreign language or culture of the grandfather, but, rather, his religion — his Jewishness. See Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, rev. ed. (New York, 1960), pp. 30 ff., 186 ff., and 256 ff., citing Marcus L. Hansen, *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant* (Rock Island, Illinois, 1938), p. 9.

The famed historian, Professor Salo W. Baron, answers the age-old question of whether the Jews are a religion, ethnic group, or nation by maintaining that they are all three. He supports his contention with the not unlikely hypothetical case of three Jewish brothers, identical triplets, born in Odessa shortly before the Russian Revolution, who have grown into manhood and respectively assumed the following positions: One brother, now in New York, maintains, "I am Jewish by religion." Another, now in Tel Aviv, avers, "I am not interested in religion — I am an Israeli citizen." The third brother, still in Odessa, testifies, "I am not a religious Jew. Religion is the opium of the masses." Professor Baron concludes that, in

Veblen's conclusion on this analysis was that the establishment of a Jewish nation would result in Jewish regression to a "life of complacent futility at home," exchanging a brand new Talmudic lore for a "free swung skeptical initiative" (p. 231).

Certainly, some of Veblen's premises are vulnerable to challenge. His somewhat dour view of the Talmudic tradition led him to believe that it was monolithic and inadaptably and, therefore, in a state where it was permitted to flourish it would impose itself and all of its *a priori* conclusions on the whole fabric of society. Happily, these assumptions have, in the event, proven incorrect. Israel is a society in which religious orthodoxy is but one organic element. On the other hand, Veblen did put his finger on the advantage afforded to the Jewish scholar by his movement from one frame of reference to another. We have indicated that the task confronting the humanities and social sciences is to translate from one frame of reference to another, and to expand the totality of understanding by exploring fully in all relevant frames the issues raised by this translation. Because the Jewish scholar is already an intellectual amphibian, he is uniquely qualified to make such translations in whatever scholarly disciplines he chooses to explore. It may be that his nerves have been rubbed raw by the transition, but he is, for that very reason, more sensitive to the phenomena that he is trying to observe.

Finally, as the case of Breuer shows clearly, a warm religious feeling need not be a hindrance to true scholarship. On the contrary, as the philosopher Max Scheler contended, an emotional interest in research may enhance the value of the enterprise.²² The problem is not one peculiar to the religiously committed, but has been confronted by every scholar who cares deeply about his work. A generation ago, in *The Modern Temper*,

some respects, it is sheer historical accident that determines which of the three brothers — who otherwise have changed little in their modes of living or ideological outlook — now resides in which country, and hence records himself as a religious Jew, an ethnic Jew, or a member of the Israeli nation. See Salo W. Baron, "Who Is a Jew?," in *History and Jewish Historians* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 19, and "New Horizons in Jewish History," in *Freedom and Reason: Studies in Philosophy and Jewish Culture in Memory of Morris Raphael Cohen* (New York, 1951), p. 338.

For an earlier perceptive analysis of why the concepts "nation" and "religion" (which are of Western or European origin, as the language of the terms here employed indicates), fail to do justice to the unique reality of the Jewish experience, see Robert Gordis, *Judaism for the Modern Age* (New York, 1955), pp. 30-48, 118f. Gordis felicitously characterizes the Jews as a "religio-cultural-ethnic group."

Mention might also be made of Professor Baron's historical law about the variations in treatment accorded to the Jews in the Diaspora: The status of the Jew is most favorable in pure states of Nationalities, most unfavorable in National States, and somewhere between the two extremes in States which include part of a nationality only. See "Nationalism and Intolerance," *Menorah Journal*, vol. 16 (1929): 503-515, and vol. 17 (1929): 148-158.

22. Max Scheler, *Moralia* (Bonn, 1923), p. 110 ff., cited by Robert Gordis, "Jewish Learning and Jewish Existence — Retrospect and Prospect," *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 6* (New York, 1963), p. 25.

Joseph Wood Krutch pointed out that scientific detached pursuit of knowledge on the one hand, and love (both agapeistic and erotic) on the other, the values emphasized by secularists, cannot be attained together. True knowledge about love (or any other exalted value), he maintains, tends, in the nature of the case, to destroy the worth of that emotion. Under the scrutiny of objective, dispassionate analysis, love forfeits all dignity, not to mention grandeur, and becomes a trivial or even ridiculous entity. The reason is that the attitude of calm detachment — essential to clear knowledge — is incompatible with the attitude of enthusiastic attachment which is necessary to the conviction that any object has real value.²³ Like the problem of cultural identity, this issue is not one to be resolved in a brief space, and never finally. The struggle to resolve the conflict, if undertaken by a scholar of integrity, cannot but have a positive effect on the work involved.

Conclusion

The Jewish scholar of the present and of the foreseeable future differs from his predecessor in that his Jewish learning, speaking in the most traditional sense, is less intense, but he has a firmer grasp of the scientific methods of research generally prevailing in the social sciences. The opinion has occasionally been expressed that the major work in Jewish studies has been completed, and that all there is room for are specialized studies written by professors for the benefit and perusal of other professors. The first part of this contention is no more true than the claim by eminent physicists around the turn of the century that all the important principles of physics had been discovered and applied. The second part mistakes the means for the ends. The specialized scientific tools may be used to enrich the value of the tradition for both the Jewish and scholarly communities. Armed with the techniques of modern research and with scientific tools unavailable to his predecessors, the young Jewish scholar of today, fired by a strong commitment and enthusiasm as he is, can make significant scholarly contributions and win the attention of a wide, educated audience. He is a worthy successor to the great pioneers in this field of scholarship and, in the words of the Psalmist we can confidently assert, "In place of your fathers shall be your children."

23. In this connection I might call attention to the procedure and methodology followed by me in the study of Maimonides. See *Maimonides and Aquinas, A Contemporary Appraisal* (New York, 1979), pp. 9 ff.

The Reasoning of Holocaust Theology

LEWIS S. FEUER

I

THE HOLOCAUST, THE DESTRUCTION OF most of Europe's Jews, was a phenomenon that seemed to sunder the ordinary arithmetic of human evil. Therefore, thinkers of high intellect and character have felt that it carried for mankind a profound philosophical message. Beside it, the verbalisms of philosophers about the "problem of evil" seemed trivial and obsolete. The "terms of philosophizing" (as we might call it) were presumably permanently altered. If the theory of relativity, when it was experimentally verified, produced such a basic change in the "terms of philosophizing" about science, then the Holocaust might well involve similar consequences for our religious beliefs and philosophy. Does the Holocaust have such a philosophical bearing, and if so, in what fashion?

In the eyes of many, the Holocaust was a unique event, perhaps the most unparalleled case of absolute evil in human history, a radically novel phenomenon. Does this alleged uniqueness establish, as some thinkers hold, the unique philosophical significance of the Holocaust?

Let us note, to begin with, that there is a great deal of inconsistency in the discussion about the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust. A unique event is one that is unrepeatable, that cannot happen again, that is, of necessity, a class with one member. Yet the aim of the discussion concerning the Holocaust is largely (and appropriately) to ensure that the like of it shall not happen again. In other words, given the nature of men and historical conditions, other Holocausts could take place, and it requires all our efforts at enlightenment and prudential measures to ensure that they shall not recur. We must endeavor that the Holocaust remain an isolated occurrence, but if it were metaphysically unique, we should have no troubles on that score. Soviet society, during Stalin's final year, for instance, was fast acquiring the kind of mentality that precedes recourse to holocaust.¹ An intent of holocaust on the part of its neighbor-states in the Middle East is always feared in Israel; indeed, under certain conditions, such an intent might be strengthened by Soviet technology and ide-

1. At the time of the alleged Jewish Doctors' plot in Moscow in 1953, as the novelist Ilya Ehrenburg described it: "Everyone said there was chaos in the hospitals, many patients regarding the doctors as dangerous and refusing to take any medicines" (*Post-War Years 1945-1954*, tr. Tatiana Shebunina, [Cleveland, 1967], p. 298).

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ological condonement. The occurrence, actual or possible, of a class of holocausts is clear evidence that sociological laws underlie them; a unique event, on the contrary, would constitute a surd with respect to sociological law.

Now the Holocaust was not so much unique as rather unprecedented. Hitherto, the mass destructions of peoples have been either those of backward tribes or nations destroying other backward ones, or those of a backward society destroying a more civilized one, as when a left-wing Turkish revolutionary government encouraged the massacre of its Armenian minority, or the Tartars of Genghis Khan massacred the townsmen of Central Asia. Occasionally, a more civilized people has desired to eliminate a backward one, as when early American colonists sought to extirpate Indian tribes. The Holocaust, apart from the vastness of its scale and its chemical technology, was the first case of one advanced people destroying another advanced one. This was unprecedented, though not necessarily unique.

To many persons, the Holocaust seems unique in the sense of what we might call a "negative miracle." A positive miracle is one such as the alleged parting of the Red Sea that would have contravened the laws of nature in a fashion so ethically purposive as to testify presumably to God's intervention in history. A negative miracle, on the other hand, would constitute evidence for God's absence or withdrawal from history, if not the actual intrusion of a dualistic anti-God, the Devil. The existence of God has always been argued for in contrary ways. On the one hand, it is inferred from the fact that great comprehensive laws of the physical order exist; on the other, alleged impressive exceptions to the physical laws, evidently advancing goodness in the world, are also taken as evidence for God's existence.

Now the Holocaust cannot be regarded as an event that contravened the laws of either sociology or physics. If it involved an unprecedented number of victims, that by itself was not a fact that contravened the laws of sociology.² The possibly several millions of Hindus and Moslems who were massacred, often in most bestial fashion, with the achievement of independence in 1947, did not testify by their numbers to either the violation of sociological law or the presence of God.³ Nor does the fact that the massacre of possibly upwards of a million Armenians was planned and

2. Even the degree of resistance that the Jews showed to the Nazis followed approximately a sociological law: the smaller the given Jewish community was, relative to the surrounding host population, the more vigorous was its resistance. The Dutch Jews thus resisted more energetically than did the Polish Jews (Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* [Toronto, 1979], p. 38).

3. "An extensive campaign of genocide was conducted against the Muslim population of East Punjab, Deli, Ajmer, and the Indian states of Kapurthala, . . . , etc., etc. The Muslims in these areas were systematically massacred" (Jyoti Bhusan Das Gupta, *Indo-Pakistan Relations 1947-1955* [Amsterdam, 1959], p. 116).

directed by the Turkish government itself give it the aspect of a meta-physical uniqueness.

Long ago, such thinkers as Freud, Einstein, and Heinrich Heine doubted whether the ethics of civilization had more than superficially replaced the drives of savagery. Freud thought that the brutalities of the First World War had made evident the workings of an aggressive drive, the violent energies of the id, that were usually curbed in unstable equilibrium with the institutions of civilized life. He had reluctantly accepted the view of a deviating pupil, Alfred Adler, that the aggressive instinct was an independent force in the human psyche not subsumable as a mode of man's sexual energy. William James, America's greatest psychologist, believed, despite his pacifist aims, that man was ultimately a bellicose animal. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a great jurist, regarded human morality as a thin veneer of politeness spread upon a bundle of cruel drives.⁴ The Holocaust might, indeed, be regarded as a macro-social confirmation of this aspect of Freud's and James's conceptions of human nature. When Einstein, in a celebrated correspondence with Freud in 1932, called upon the penetrating, life-long inquirer to analyze how the human races might ward off the outburst of a Second World War that was already threatening, Freud could do little except recognize the power of the universal drive toward aggression, and hope that it might be partially contained by the Eros in man. Five years later, in 1937, Bertrand Russell thought that Europe, careening toward disaster, was verifying Freud's theory of the death-wish.⁵

Whatever the character of the universal propensity to aggression, specific social circumstances have given to that drive the specific social form of genocide. It is a melancholy generalization that, in the twentieth century, the phenomena of genocide have occurred exclusively through the workings of socialist or leftist-minded dictatorships. The Young Turks' regime which massacred the Armenians in 1916 was suffused with presumably high aims for social betterment; the German Nazis had removed the blight of unemployment from the lives of its workers by a bold socialistic policy that evoked the praise of the dramatist, Bernard Shaw and the British economist, John Maynard Keynes.⁶ The genocide executed by the Cambodian Communist regime against a section of its people, the forced exodus and genocide of Chinese "boat people" by the Vietnamese Communist regime, the massacre of Arabs by the black leftist leaders of Zanzibar, the tribal genocides under several African socialist

4. *Justice Holmes to Doctor Wu: An Intimate Correspondence, 1921-1932* (New York, 1947), p. 37; *Holmes-Laski Letters: The Correspondence of Mr. Justice Holmes and Harold J. Laski, 1916-1935*, ed. Mark DeWolfe Howe (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), Vol. II, p. 837.

5. Sigmund Freud, "Why War?", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London, 1964), Vol. XXII, p. 211; Bertrand Russell, "Two Statesmen," *New Statesman and Nation*, XIII (1937): 416.

6. Bernard Shaw, *Complete Plays with Prefaces* (New York, 1963), Vol. V, p. 641.

rulers, and the extensive Soviet extirpation of several of its Asian minorities⁷ suggest that there is a high holocaustal potential in socialist totalitarian societies. The continuing spread of such social regimes bodes an ominous recurrence of genocides; the Holocaust, far from having been proved to be a unique phenomenon, may have possibly proved the precursor of such multiple phenomena.

II

Does the Spirit of God make of the genocidal centers its especial sanctuary, its *Shekhinah*, where its exceptional presence can impart the Divine Message most effectively? Were the burning bodies in Auschwitz our modern analogue of the burning bush that inspired Moses in the Midianite desert? The burning bush heightened the belief in God; the furnaces of Auschwitz diminished it. A majority of the survivors may have believed in the existence of God before the Holocaust; that was not the case afterward when the proportion of believers (in a studied sample) had declined to 38 percent.⁸

Few survivors felt that if the voice of God is to be heard at all it would be heard through the bitter struggle of a painfully tormenting substance.

The belief that the Jews were a chosen people also evidently subsided among survivors; the 41 percent who had held such a view before the Holocaust were reduced to one-third thereafter. Other creeds were even more strenuously repudiated for having failed during the crisis, and survivors often characterized them as damnable.⁹

Was the Holocaust, then, the instrumentality through which God's will achieved the founding of a state of Israel? It is probably true as a matter of historical causation that, had there not been a Holocaust, a Jewish state would not have been created in 1948. Nevertheless, only a small number of the survivors, six percent of them, dared assert that the founding of Israel was worth "the sacrifice of the Six Millions."¹⁰

Perhaps, however, it should be borne in mind that ideas of the Holocaustal survivors are naturally imbued with the kind of transient bitterness that affected the patriarch Job. In his miseries, Job, calling God to account, would have challenged Him before an impartial tribunal; doubtless the survivors would have challenged God as well. Despite the survivors' predominant standpoint, distinguished theologians and many young Jews continue to be drawn to a Holocaust Theology. From Auschwitz, they affirm, there emanates a new commandment, a six hundred and

7. Alexander M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War*, tr. George Saunders (New York, 1978), pp. 96, 104; Robert Conquest, *The Nation-Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (New York, 1970), p. 162; Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, 1978), pp. 145, 149, 154, 159, 161.

8. Reeve Robert Brenner, *The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors* (New York, 1980), p. 92.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 84.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

fourteenth, to add to those enumerated in the Pentateuch: that the authentic Jew today is forbidden to assist Hitler to a posthumous victory — namely, the obliteration of the Jewish identity through assimilation, inattention, or indifference.¹¹

But what does it mean to grant Hitler a posthumous victory? Hitler's program was the physical extermination of the Jews; he was as violently opposed to accepting any assimilation of the Jews as he was to their ethnic persistence. What Hitler hated was the Jews' physical being in any social form, the sheer Jewish genetic continuance in the human species. Those who condemn Jewish assimilation, it might consistently be argued, are the ones who are handing Hitler a "posthumous victory." Indeed, whenever one reverts, or regresses, to patterns of tribalist-shaped thought, whenever one abandons reason and mocks against the cosmopolitan, eighteenth century rationalism, one is, to that extent, granting to Hitler a fraction of the victory which he sought. A Jewish intelligence, battered into a tribal irrationalism would, indeed, constitute a partial victory for Hitler; a Jewish survival in the biological sense in humanity's genetic basis, one might argue, might, by contrast, represent a big defeat for him. Would, however, the dispersal of Jewish genes throughout the "gene-pool" of the world's populations involve a tremendous loss of the most concentrated intellectual powers of mankind, a loss that would super-add to the Holocaust that was the greatest genetic catastrophe in human history? In any case, the alternatives for social decision will be considered most wisely if we disregard asking what Adolf Hitler's preferences would have been; we should decide the terms of our partnership with future generations (to adapt Edmund Burke's phrase) as rationally as we can in terms of our own desires and feelings, and not shape our philosophy by asking ourselves what an evil Nazi madman would have wished.

For Hitler's basic attack was against reason, the one common bond of humanity; to the extent that we capitulate to the irrational, we are, indeed, giving Hitler an element of victory. If, on the other hand, we were to succeed in restoring full employment, we would scarcely be conferring upon Hitler a posthumous triumph even though he, too, aimed to eliminate unemployment. Although tribal feelings and identifications have their just place among the emotional ties that we would preserve, tribalist ideology, however, like all ideology, is a species of assault against reason.

III

Catastrophes to life and the human spirit are a recurrent theme in biological history; every destroyed species, variety, tribe, people, and race has been an example of radical evil, which is hardly a new phenomenon under our sun. During the Crusades, when Christians and Moslem warri-

11. Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Return into History* (New York, 1978), pp. 22, 109; Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York, 1970), pp. 71. 83.

ors alike were venting their military frustrations upon the unarmed Jews, Maimonides, with magnificent serenity, elaborated his proofs for the existence of God. The fluctuations in social outlook, of pessimism and optimism, do, indeed, have a law of their own that is relatively independent of the traumas and triumphs that we sustain.

The Lisbon Earthquake of November 1, 1755 is often said to have provoked a widespread revulsion against Leibnizian optimism, and scholars have expected that a similar reaction would be evoked in our time by the Holocaust. The Lisbon Earthquake is said to have been the "disaster that had shocked western civilisation more than any other event since the fall of Rome in the twelfth century."¹² "What crime, what misdeed have the children done / Who lie crushed and bleeding on their mothers' bosoms?," cried Voltaire in his *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*. And the lesson he drew was: "The elements, animals, the humans, all are at war / We must recognize it, evil rests upon the earth." Yet Voltaire had surrendered his optimism long before the Earthquake, which only added its dramatic shattering of the "all's well" doctrine, whose shallow cheerfulness permeates Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*.

Now the Holocaust was evil in multiple dimensions compared to the simple geometry of the Lisbon Earthquake. The latter was a natural accident, a consequence of physical forces, involving no act of human will, no decision to annihilate a branch of the human race, no indictment of humankind;¹³ even the Portuguese government, under the Marquis of Pombal, exerted itself at once to bring succor to the injured and orphaned. If God, the Author of the laws of seismology, were nonetheless to be held accountable, then the Holocaust, by contrast, provides a magnified bill of particulars against both God and His human creation. For the Holocaust, a deliberately planned and organized political act, enlisted in its execution many thousands of executioners and their assistants. Its motive: to obliterate a whole people because they were too intelligent, too creative, too venturesome, or too proud to have allowed themselves, during two thousand years, to vanish in the surrounding population.

The Holocaust cannot be justified as an incident in God's plan for a higher perfection on the earth. For the Holocaust was, indeed, a case of Radical Evil. What is Radical Evil? I should define it as an evil that is so unalloyed, so infinitely debasing and cruel, that it cannot possibly be transfigured, or compensated for, through some purportedly higher historic good. True, without the Holocaust, there probably would have been no state of Israel; without the Holocaust, the Israeli soldiers would not have been imbued with the moral strength to reject as unthinkable any acquiescence to defeat. Nonetheless, who would dare say that the creation of the state of Israel was worth an Auschwitz, a Treblinka, a Maidanek?

12. T.D. Kendrick, *The Lisbon Earthquake* (London, 1956), p. 122.

13. Evidently there was some effort, however, to impute the earthquake to the tolerance that the Portuguese had shown the Jews. Cf. T.D. Kendrick, *Op. cit.*, pp. 86, 106.

No calculus of martyrdoms can provide us with such an equation, no Benthamite solution for a maximum of pleasures and a minimum of pains. If some transcendental mathematician had thus solved the equation, he must have repressed the victims themselves, who were given no choice as coefficients of extinction.

For among the grimmest aspects of Hitler's Holocaust was that he contrived to deny to the victims the status of martyrdom itself. A martyr is a person who has been offered a choice. If he accepts one alternative, he is spared; if he refuses, he pays with his life. Until the Holocaust, the massacres of Jews in Europe were much contingent upon their refusal to be converted to Christianity. The Cossacks in 1648, led by Chmielnicki, massacred Polish Jews on a scale that was genocidal, yet, as Heinrich Graetz wrote concerning the murders at Nesterov:

After they had robbed the Jews of all their possessions, the Cossacks gave them the choice between death and baptism. The Jews, however, scorned the offer, . . . (The following year, in 1649, when a peace was temporarily concluded) Jews who had submitted to baptism under compulsion were given permission by the king [of Poland] to return to their ancestral faith.¹⁴

The Jewish victims of Hitler were not accorded the privilege of martyrdom, the vestigial residue of their human status. Again this was unprecedented in the annals of persecution; not even Torquemada of the Spanish Inquisition would have dared suppress the last minimal choice. Such cruelty, again not necessarily unique, from a metaphysical standpoint, remains grounded in the nature of man and his multiform possibilities.

European thought recovered quite quickly from the impact of the Lisbon Earthquake. An optimist postulate was soon reinstated by Western philosophers. Immanuel Kant, a few months after the catastrophe, wrote essays on its various aspects that held up the American philosopher and inventor, Benjamin Franklin as "the Prometheus of the New Age," the exemplar of those forces that would direct nature's energies toward satisfying human needs.¹⁵ Soon the French revolutionaries, with high optimism, were to undertake their purported road to human perfection and Condorcet, the friend of Voltaire, was to write — in the very shadow of the guillotine — his celebrated sketch of the history of human progress.

IV

Oddly enough, Holocaust theology appeals most to those who still wish to translate, or sublimate their longing for a supernatural redemption into an axiom of natural earthly progress. It still nourishes the conviction

14. H. Graetz, *Popular History of the Jews*, tr. A.B. Rhine, ed. Alexander Harkavy (New York, 1935), Vol. V, pp. 89, 94, 92; S.M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, tr. I. Friedlaender (Philadelphia, 1916), Vol. I, pp. 148, 150, 156-157.

15. Ernst Cassirer *et al.*, *Vorkritische Schriften* (Berlin, 1922), Band 1, p. 484.

tion that the Holocaust miseries were an agency in the Divine Plan for Human History for a higher happiness.

The Holocaust itself did plainly tend to contravene the notion that God had underwritten a guarantee for a law for earthly progress. The Holocaust did confute crypto-theology, that is, the ideology of history, with its tenet that high technology makes for high-mindedness in ethics. Moreover, it would violate common sense to maintain that God's will had made Auschwitz into his indwelling-place, his *Shekhinah*. If the prospect of earthly progress rested on God's guarantee, then the confutation of progress would show that God does not exist, and the Holocaust would serve as the Atheist's Empirical Argument.

The existence of God, however, cannot be linked integrally with the notion of indefinite human progress. When all theodicies collapse, the proposition that alone might withstand criticism is that God's will could be fully realized only in an Eternal Noumenal Reality. Only in a divine domain might the sacrificed children and the wasted, tormented lives of a Lisbon and an Auschwitz experience a re-significance. Like the physical mass that approaches infinity as its speed nears that of light, perhaps the truncated human lives in an Eternal Noumenal Setting are enhanced to realize potentialities that were annihilated in transient material existence. Radical evils are not transfigured in any sequence of earthly time; only if a noumenal reality exists, co-involved with, yet transcending, its polar phenomenal contrary, could Job's challenge be met; otherwise, the existence of that evil would invalidate that of God. No law of history, or earthly theodicy, could possibly justify the ways of God; His aims, if He exists, are not fulfilled in our space-time. A successor world in time, even a beautiful one, could not undo the pain inflicted upon a destroyed species or people that has been excluded from a share in that successor world.

The universe of time, with all of its evils, horrors, and goods, we might extrapolate, is, through unknown "transformation equations," wrought into an External Noumenal Reality in which the divine ingredient is pervasive and enlarged. How this transformation is done can be characterized only in metaphorical terms. The English idealist philosopher, F.H. Bradley, once struggled with all of his verbal resources to suggest how temporal facts might be re-cast into the reality of an Absolute Experience: "the finites blend and are resolved," he wrote; they are "transmuted;" their "divergences" are "absorbed," their "discordance . . . overruled", a "consummation" in which all distinctions are "suppressed."¹⁶ The Eternal Noumenal Reality is not, however, an Absolute which, perforce, sponge-like absorbs all phenomenal realities, for much of that phenomenal world might utterly vanish, as most of its "values," its evils, would approximate to zero, we might say mathematically, and

16. F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*, sec. ed. (London, 1899), pp. 429, 430, 488, 467, 488, 462.

become cancelled terms. The Noumenal Reality is not approached through a temporal series as the limit of a historic process of progressively diminishing cruel events; it is not the end-term of a progressive series of realizations. Yet even if there be no progressive series, nevertheless, such goods as have been actualized among all its members might be trans-realized, that is, their distinctive values would be selected and intensified in what we may call a trans-jective reality. Perhaps the hatred-terms of existence vanish and men become ends only, never means. If cruelties, killings and tortures do not become the locus of a divine message when their numbers are increased manifold, then, presumably, in the Noumenal Reality they are filtered out to have no part in the divine character of things.

According to Jewish theologians in the massacre-laden centuries of the Middle Ages, the coming of a Messiah would not abolish human imperfections and evils; his advent was a political forecast, not a religious principle. The rule of the Messiah was to be a temporal event bringing more peace and good health but not altering the class structure of society, said Maimonides. The era of the Messiah's rule was not to be confounded with the eternity of the human mind or of active intellect. Joseph Albo noted that one could disbelieve altogether in the occurrence of physical resurrection, and still accept the Law of Moses.¹⁷ Realizations in historical time can, indeed, never obliterate evil or transform it completely into a higher good; only in the eternal realm would evil be deprived of whatever reality it might have possessed. Though the devices of idealistic philosophy for rectifying the evil appearances of phenomenal existence were scarcely describable, that was no adequate reason for dismissing them. Every philosophy seems, indeed, to terminate in some surd proposition, as it endeavors to approximate, or to bend, realities to a plausible fitness with its conceived scheme. Idealistic philosophy remains unconvincing, however, because it seems impelled to hide from its sight the radical character of radical evil. We don't quite believe that the phenomenal bestialities of the Holocaust can be "transmuted," "blended," "resolved," or "absorbed." We can think of them as excluded but never elevated into a constituent, through some metaphysical chemistry, of a higher good. Perhaps the eternal domain might be purified of them but could not incorporate, sublate, or assimilate them.

Perhaps in an eternalistic supra-world, or anti-world, prefigured in

17. *Moses Maimonides' Treatise on Resurrection*, tr. Fred Rosner (New York, 1982), pp. 78-79. "Maimonides makes a rigid demarcation between the Messianic Age in which events retain their physical context, and the world to come where existence is spiritual only" (p. 17); "Rabbi Hillel did not believe in the coming of the Messiah at all, . . . it is not a fundamental principle of the Law of Moses, . . ." (Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha-'Ikkarim, Book of Principles*, tr. Isaac Husik [Philadelphia, 1929], Vol. One, p. 47); Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, tr. W.F. Stinespring (New York, 1955), p. 415; Rev. A. Cohen, *The Teaching of Maimonides* (New York, 1968), pp. 226-228.

the daring relativist solutions of the logician, Kurt Gödel, while the world's goods are trans-realized, the evils, on the other hand, are nullified. In such speculation, we can be guided by the fact that a rare anomaly in experiment or observation can set the direction for a basic reconstruction of scientific theory. Some minor experimental effects, valid only for unusual speeds, provided the background for Einstein's theoretical reconstruction. The lodestone and the lightning, marginal phenomena compared to the everyday mechanical pushes and pulls, proved, despite their marginality, to provide the penetrative access into underlying physical reality. Similarly, the comparatively rare manifestations of the *nisus* toward ethical good in this universe, not to mention the rare occurrence of conscious, living existence against the background of the bleak, impercipient activity of the physical world, are like observed "effects," outcroppings that seem inexplicable without the assumption that they arise from an underlying, or co-involved, polar spiritual reality. Perhaps the dross of history, the pain and sacrifice of millions of species rendered extinct, the tortured fears of primitive humans, the never-ending anxieties of persons who, though advantaged by consciousness in the struggle for existence, are penalized by being the only animals having a foreknowledge of death, — perhaps all that is separated and distilled away from Noumenal Reality. It is not solely a will-to-believe that projects the supra-natural order, for its outcroppings in the material world seem real enough. The conviction that beautiful simple laws governed natural phenomena was, from Newton and Leibniz to Einstein and Eddington, animated by belief in a reason-desirous God. With nature thus rendered rational, may we venture a counterpart "great extrapolation" to an underlying beauty in the living and mental domains, that otherwise seem so ugly and repugnant? Higher noumenal laws, as yet unknown to us, might embrace both those of the material world and an underlying or counterpart spiritual reality, of which we perceive only the supervenient effects.

It is the rare advent of good, not the frequent occurrence of evil, that poses the anomalous phenomenon, — the genuine problem. According to the law of entropy, our universe is one in which all moves toward "degradation," with elegant order and beauty disappearing. That the good interposes itself and manages to survive, for a while, against such overwhelming odds, suggests that its source is a noumenal one, whose expression in the physical world is forever inadequate, even distorted.

V

Apart from any putative religious commandment associated with Auschwitz, for this historical era the Holocaust's events have probably undermined whatever plausibility the temporalist theology of such men as William James and Bernard Shaw might once have had. James had conceived a pragmatic theology according to which the salvation of the

world was potential in human choices, "the condition being that each several agent does its own 'level best' . . ." God and men were to cooperate in meeting the world's dangers:

The world's safety is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of cooperative work genuinely to be done.¹⁸

As a pragmatist, James made an immense leap of faith through affirming the pragmatic postulate: that, much as in life, whether in courtships or commercial enterprises, the victory goes to the man with confidence in his cause, so, likewise, by faith in God and His adventure we would provide the infantry for His generalship.

This pragmatic postulate of faith was, for many persons, shattered, perhaps irretrievably, during the Holocaust. Among the Ghetto fighters, Marxists with their long-term faith in the international working class movement waited pitifully for aid from the Polish workers' movement, and looked hopelessly into the skies for some solitary airplane gesturing its support from the advancing Soviet armies, for a single bomb to be dropped on the lethal gas chambers; but their will to believe conjured nothing from the metaphysical "social scheme of cooperative work." In Britain, the Home Secretary, a Laborite in the Wartime Coalition Cabinet, balked at receiving 1,000 Jewish children lest anti-Semitism be provoked;¹⁹ American officials succeeded not in only keeping Jewish wartime refugees from these shores, but, also, in throttling negotiations for saving some small fraction of those scheduled for extinction at Nazi hands. The Vichy French regime bartered Jews to preserve a shameless French parody of autonomy; the republican conscience which once proclaimed the Rights of Man reached a nadir of degradation. As long as the Holocaust is a living memory, it is doubtful that the will-to-believe of pragmatic theology will ever have the resonance of truthfulness. Henceforth, the will-to-believe smacks of make-believe. And Shaw's Life Force seems a mis-nomer for a Death Drive in which the worst not infrequently unite to destroy the best. "Extermination" became a central theme in his later drama.²⁰

The pragmatist postulate was essential if the realization of the world's possible perfection in time was to have at least a fighting chance. With that postulate gone, however, and our theistic views detached from the prospect of temporal realization, we shall look frankly to Eternal Noumenal Reality, outside time-processes, as that wherein good alone perdures. A book of essays, *The God that Failed*, published more than thirty years ago, was composed of autobiographies of men who had traversed

18. Cited in Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Thirteen Pragmatisms and Other Essays* (Baltimore, 1963), pp. 76-77; William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), p. 187.

19. Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 112-113.

20. Bernard Shaw, *Complete Plays with Prefaces* (New York, 1963), Vol. V, p. 479f.

the experience of Marxist ideology and found it wanting. More properly, it was but a sub-species of experiences whose generality deserved a book, *All Gods Fail*, for, indeed, all temporal gods are predestined to defeat and decay, and whatever hopes we have for the enduring significance of human greatness must be founded on an extra-historical noumenal reality.

Why did the Holocaust as an event evoke such little response from avowed professional philosophers or writers on ethics? No figure comparable to Kant arose to discuss the Holocaust as he had the Lisbon Earthquake. Bertrand Russell, in the last years of his life, ignored the subject; logical empiricists, linguistic analysts and scientific philosophers evinced no interest. Probably the Holocaust was a non-problem because Western European thought had predominantly arrived at a pervasive pessimistic standpoint long before the Second World War. In empiricist circles at that time the pursuing of one's "values" in logical arguments and critical studies smacked of a desperate effort to obliterate in one's work the meaninglessness of things; an unwritten understanding prevailed that "ultimate" questions were not in good form. What Thomas Henry Huxley called the "nightmare" that had descended upon European intellectuals with the primacy of deterministic convictions still weighs upon Western thought. The hapless Eddington was pounced upon by positivist reviewers for venturing to link the principle of indeterminacy with the freedom of the will. The intensity with which they did so suggests that they were trying to harden themselves to their own atheism by virulently criticizing a philosopher who externalized their own inner longings or underbeliefs. At the Unity of Science Congress that convened at Harvard University in September, 1939, on the very first day of the Second World War, one had the sense of a last ritual enacted by those who apprehended that human values were a fragile, transient occurrence soon to be overwhelmed by the irresistible powers of unreason. Outstanding scientists, as refugees, already seemed to accept defeat as their lot. As for Americans, all had read "A Free Man's Worship" and agreed with it, except for the title. Men were not "free," nor did they want to worship; the title should rather have been "Why Life Is Not Worth Living, and What One Can Do To Forget About It." Moreover, the question itself was perhaps meaningless, since one had to be alive to ask the question, and the answer itself could not be acted upon dispassionately because, once alive, the imperatives of life, — through a kind of "vitacentric predicament" — cancelled the choice of non-existence.

Holocaust theology will not, however, dispel such pessimism by claiming that Auschwitz, with a mandate for the survival of Jews as Jews, is the source of a new philosophy. Whether the Jews will survive or not depends in large part on whether Jewish culture remains sufficiently attractive to counteract the momentum toward assimilation. The real problem is whether a renaissance of the religious spirit, congruent with

the scientific standpoint, is possible, whether Huxley's "nightmare" can be undone without recourse to fantasy, whether the kind of conjunction of science with religion that Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz knew can again become part of our philosophy.

Every philosophical system, we must all recognize, eventuates in some surd. The materialist, for example, finds that, try as he may, no law or device avails to persuade him that he can explain the advent of mental events or entities. At such junctures, the philosopher makes what is as much a leap of repression as a leap of faith; the insoluble problem is banished, perhaps as meaningless or illegitimate, by some convention of language or the laboratory. But if the philosopher dares enquire into the sources of his philosophical denial, he finds to his discomfort that some social circumpressure, such non-logical influences as the power of fashions, circles of associates, and social animosities, have been most efficacious.

A philosophical inquiry, pursued with an utmost discounting of genetic circumpressures and intrapressures, may terminate with a heightened sense of the inexplicable. If the categories of the human, scientific systems do not altogether avail for philosophical understanding, perhaps we shall resolve such problems, though not solve them, in terms of what Leibniz called "the principle of the fitness of things," the working postulate according to which a harmony prevails in the underlying realities.²¹

21. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*, tr. E.M. Huggard, ed. Diogenes Allen (Indianapolis, 1966), pp. 59, 65.

David in History: A Secular Approach

JACK CARGILL

FOR THE SECULAR HISTORIAN WHO FINDS theistic explanations of events and developments unconvincing and, in fact, meaningless, the Hebrew Bible is a difficult source to use. Historians of ancient Greece have no trouble disentangling Herodotus' gods from his narrative of events, largely accepting the latter while ignoring the former. With Thucydides, the process is hardly even necessary, as the Greek gods seem scarcely more real to him than to the secular modern reader. But Yahweh permeates the Biblical text, including the "historical" books. Events are repeatedly ascribed to his active intervention in human affairs, and rulers and others are judged according to whether they are "blessed by Yahweh" and whether they serve what are said to be his purposes. The Biblical narratives relating to the supplanting of King Saul by David and to David's subsequent years of rule exemplify these general tendencies. The dynasty and the capital city which David established became central elements in the enduring traditions of Israel and Judah and in the other religious traditions which grew out of them. But the size of the edifice can interfere with close examination of its cornerstone. What David has *become* — in Judaic, Christian, and even secularized tradition — can make it difficult to see who and what he *was*. The processes which have made David a very much larger-than-life character had already begun by the time the Biblical narratives received their present form.

The arcana of Biblical textual criticism lie beyond the capacity — and interest — of most of us, a fact which has had the unfortunate effect of leaving generalized treatment largely in the hands of writers (and movie makers) who are insufficiently skeptical of the Biblical authors' statements and motives. Yet, both in the books of Samuel and Kings and in the largely derivative books of Chronicles, what we now have has been created and/or worked over by writers and editors with cultic or theological or social or political axes to grind, and often without any great regard for consistency or historical accuracy. Although some of the Davidic stories are commonly described as being among the least slanted and most factual parts of the Biblical text, even these narratives are highly theologized and selective. There is an "ends justify the means" aura in Biblical David stories that has been uncritically adopted in almost everything — popular and even scholarly — written about him.

Nothing prevents us, however, from looking at the Biblical narratives about David without this hindsight and this bias. No unusual sophistica-

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tion is required for handling the text intelligently. Behind textual scholars' professional jargon about "A Narrative," "B Narrative," datable strands, revisions, etc., is the use of educated common sense, which is equally available to thoughtful non-specialists. The basic reason why a story may be called "unreliable" is usually that it seems unbelievable, or at least very unlikely. The basic reason why a narrative may be described as "late" is usually that it seems to presuppose some knowledge that should have been unavailable at the time of the events described. Scholars associated with (and/or employed by) institutions that are identified with the religious traditions which revere the memory of David do not wish to say so too explicitly, but it is also a fact that narratives are generally seen as unreliable if they include any accounts of specific divine activity which cannot be explained away by less "supernatural" phrasing. Finally, we should have some respect for the traditional maxim that preserved information which *contradicts* the source's apparent purpose or bias is more likely to be true than information which is consistent with it. The historian's job is to try to be objective and to express conclusions with clarity, not to obfuscate and hedge. The picture of David that emerges from a more critical approach is that of an opportunist of great talent, ambition, and pretensions, whose personal relations were manipulative, but also often passionate or excessively indulgent.¹

Three separate Biblical narratives relate to the emergence of David as a leader under Saul. Only a desperate literalism would attempt to harmonize and believe them all. There may well have been a huge Philistine from Gath — perhaps one of a family of gigantic warriors — but there is even good *Biblical* evidence that Goliath was slain by someone other than David. Nor is it believable that an army of prideful soldiers would let a mere boy fight as its champion. Another of the three stories, the one which tells of Samuel's early anointing of the boy David, is so highly theologized that it is commonly regarded as suspect. It is possible to conclude, in fact, that the religious leader's break with Saul (which is central to this story) may be exaggerated even when given its later, more public, context, i.e., the aftermath of Saul's defeat of the Amalekites. The breach may, in fact, be entirely fictional, a justificatory cover story for David's sup-

1. The Biblical scholar whose approach I find most congenial is Prof. Morton Smith of Columbia University, in several works: "The So-Called 'Biography of David' in the Books of Samuel and Kings," *Harvard Theological Review*, 44 (1951): 167-169; "The Present State of Old Testament Studies," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 88 (1969): 19-35; and *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York and London, 1971), especially pp. 1-56. Smith was kind enough to give a careful reading to an early draft of this essay, offering many corrections and helpful suggestions. For assistance (necessarily less extensive) of a similar kind, I wish also to thank my colleagues Warren I. Susman and Thomas P. Slaughter, and Dr. Robert Gordis, editor of *JUDAISM*. Other discussions that I have found useful are those of my former teacher, John H. Otwell, "Neo-Orthodoxy and Biblical Research," *HTR*, 43 (1950): 145-157; Robert H. Pfeiffer, "Facts and Faith in Biblical History," *JBL*, 70 (1951): 1-14; and Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, rev. ed. (New York and Evanston, 1960).

planting of Saul. Otherwise, it is difficult to see why Samuel, who supposedly has just denounced Saul to his face and told him that Yahweh has rejected him as king, should be persuaded to show outward respect to Saul in the sacrificial ceremony before the army. Which will the historical researcher more readily trust: a conversation (reported by whom?) between Samuel and Saul, or the statement that Samuel showed Saul respect at a public ceremony? The third story, and the one most often accepted as plausible, tells of David's first winning Saul's favor through his musical skills. This is possible, and there is no particular reason to rule it out, though it is at least equally believable that David attracted Saul's notice, and won advancement, simply because of his prowess as a soldier. Certainly the Biblical text's implication that David was appointed *chiliarch* because of Saul's *hostility* to him strains credulity. One might say as much for the idea that Saul offered to make David his son-in-law in order to get him killed, though others may find this interpretation compatible with the unsettled times.²

The eventual breach between Saul and David is unquestionably historical, but we need not accept the Biblical story that Saul irrationally provoked it. No tradition of lifelong, and certainly none of hereditary, monarchy yet existed among the Israelites. Why should not an ambitious commander hope to supplant the current anointed leader? Even if he did not, the king might quite sanely *suppose* that he did, especially since the king's own talented and ambitious son, Jonathan, seemed to be in league with that potential supplanter, perhaps, indeed, his homosexual lover. David's wife, Michal, is said to have told her father, Saul, that David had compelled her to help him escape by threatening her life; the surrounding narrative is supposed to make us believe that she was lying. Yet the only subsequent relations between David and Michal in the Biblical account are perfunctory and unfriendly. Two further stories (one commonly dismissed as a doublet of the other) designed to show David's non-hostility toward Saul, even while a fugitive, are manifestly fictional. If, as the text says, Saul and David were reconciled after David's sparing of Saul's life in the cave and/or in the camp, why did David remain on the run, rather than returning to his former position of honor?³

No strict chronology should be suggested for David's wanderings as a fugitive, since such fictional episodes are interjected, and other stories may have been shifted around. That David's kinsmen would have joined him seems entirely believable, since their fate, if they did not, is easily

2. Goliath: I Sam. 17; cf. II Sam. 21:15-22; I Chr. 20:5-8. Samuel: I Sam. 15:10-16:13. Music: I Sam. 16:14-23. Soldier: I Sam. 14:52; 18:5, 14, 16, 30; 19:8. Hostility: I Sam. 18:12-13, 17-25. Passages in translation are quoted from *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, NY, 1966), unless another translation is cited.

3. Provocation: I Sam. 18:8-11; 19:4-5, 9-10; 20:1, 32-33; 22:14; 24:18-20; 26:17-21. Jonathan: I Sam. 18:1, 3; 19:1; 20:3, 8, 17, 30-34, 41; 22:8; 23:16-18; II Sam. 1:26. Michal: I Sam. 19:11-17; II Sam. 3:12-16; 6:16, 20-23; I Chr. 15:29. Life-sparing: I Sam. 24 and 26.

imagined; the same thing may be said for his putting his parents in safe-keeping in Moab. David's followers are described as "all the oppressed, those in distress, all those in debt, anyone who had a grievance," but this description is presumably rather generous (Saul's minimal regime lacked the capacity to be very oppressive by modern standards); elsewhere it is said that David's followers included "rogues and scoundrels". The episode involving Nabal and his wife, Abigail, after one cuts through the laudatory verbiage, depicts David and his men as bandits, despoiling prosperous herdsmen for "protection." The canny Abigail knew how to conciliate the bandit chieftain. May we not reasonably see something suspicious in Nabal's sudden death, which left her — only a few days later — a wealthy widow, free to marry David? David and his men supposedly "saved the inhabitants of Keilah" from the Philistines, but it is also said that they fled the town because they believed that its people would turn them over to Saul. Perhaps the townspeople were only making a difficult, but rational, choice between their benefactors and the punitively-inclined king; perhaps, also, David's services to them are exaggerated. David's struggle with Saul also apparently had North-vs.-south, Israel-vs.-Judah overtones, as his later struggle with Saul's son, Ishbaal, certainly had. Saul is said to have addressed his officers as "men of Benjamin," i.e., of his own Northern tribe, asking them whether David could offer them the kinds of fields, vineyards, and positions of command that he could; he is also said to have promised to "track him down through all the clans of Judah."⁴

The Philistines were an omnipresent menace to Saul's kingdom. A narrative relating to the early days of his kingship, prior to any mention of David, refers to "Hebrews who had earlier taken service with the Philistines" and it is not surprising that a rebel against Saul, such as David, should have gravitated toward them. The story of David's feigning madness before King Achish of Gath is problematic, and the prescript of Psalm 56 ("Of David, when the Philistines held him in Gath") is deceptive. The main narrative makes it quite clear that he took service with Achish voluntarily and calculatingly, and his connection with Gath continued into his own kingship. The other Philistine captains' distrust of employing him in an anticipated battle against Saul is certainly believable. If we also believe, however, that David — for more than a year — deceived Achish by raiding *only* peoples unfriendly to the Israelites, pretending all the while that he was attacking the Israelites and kindred tribes, we are as credulous as the Biblical account makes Achish out to be! On the other hand, the story that some of the booty of the bandit David should have found its way into the hands of the elders of Judah seems entirely probable. Judah was his ultimate "constituency," whereas the connection with Achish, the Philistine, was a temporary expedient, like many others in his

4. Followers: I Sam. 22:1-4; 30:22; cf. I Chr. 12:1-23. Abigail: I Sam. 25. Keilah: I Sam. 23:1-13. North-vs.-South: I Sam. 22:7; 23:23.

career, an allegiance to be cast aside as lightly as the others. The Philistines served the rebel's purpose: Saul perished in battle with them at Mount Gilboa.⁵

Perhaps Saul committed suicide on seeing the battle hopelessly lost, as one Biblical account says. Perhaps, as another account says, he was slain by someone who reported the deed to David, bringing tokens in proof and presumably expecting a reward; in this story the reward was death. Simply fiction, or righteous wrath, or "dead men tell no tales?" In any case, the motif is repeated at the death of Saul's son, Ishbaal — but this is to get ahead of our story. After the death of Yahweh's anointed, a struggle for supreme power ensued between Ishbaal in the North and David in the South. David occupied the city of Hebron and was proclaimed king in Judah. After two years, if we may trust the Biblical chronology, Ishbaal quarreled with his military commander (and the power behind his throne) Abner, who went over to David, promising to carry the bulk of Ishbaal's supporters with him. Two of Ishbaal's mercenary commanders completed the job by murdering him, hoping to earn David's gratitude thereby — poor fools! Nor was Abner himself any luckier; David's commander, Joab, slew him, too.⁶

Joab, doubtless, had motives of his own: blood-feud for Abner's killing of his brother, as well as the desire to eliminate a rival (Abner was not the last intended replacement to feel Joab's steel). It is possible that, as the narrative says, Joab was simply too powerful for David to punish, but the Biblical report of David's innocence, dismay, and grief is so strident and repetitive as almost to encourage the suspicion that it is designed to allay. In any event, Joab went entirely unpunished and continued to command David's best forces throughout his reign. Indeed, David without Joab as "hatchet-man" would have accomplished little. Joab rarely wavered in his loyalty, despite his master's occasional politically-motivated favoritism toward others; he was content to let the ruler receive credit for military victories that he himself had won. Probably the only Biblical narrative in which David can be suspected of receiving *less* than his due concerns the ultimate fate of Joab. On his deathbed, David is reported to have advised his son, Solomon, to punish Joab for his bloody deeds, advice that was soon followed. The story of this deathbed death-warrant was probably created more to justify *Solomon* than David — perhaps created, in fact, by Solomon. On the other hand, if David really did give Solomon such advice, his actual motivation (one not even hinted at in this narrative) is most likely to have been not any lingering remorse about Abner *et al.*, but the fact that Joab, against orders, had slain David's rebel son, Absalom. At

5. Philistine menace: I Sam. 14:21, 52; 23:24-28. Gath: I Sam. 21:11-16; 27:1-4; II Sam. 6:10-11; 15:18-22; 18:2; I Chr. 13:13-14; 18:1. Distrust: I Sam. 29:1-5; I Chr. 12:20. Achish deceived: I Sam. 27:5-12; 29:6-10. Elders: I Sam. 30:26-31. Gilboa: I Sam. 31.

6. Saul: I Sam. 31:4; I Chr. 10:4; cf. II Sam. 1:2-16. Ishbaal: II Sam. 2:10; 3:6-21; 4:2-12. Abner: II Sam. 3:22-27.

the time, though Joab temporarily lost some degree of preferment, David had been forced to accept the necessity of his son's death as indispensable to his own survival as king.⁷

While still at Hebron, David had added the kingship of now-leaderless Israel to that of Judah. The connection was never more than personal, and it endured for only one additional generation. The capture of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem — identified with neither the Northern nor the Southern tribes — and the establishment there of his permanent capital undoubtedly showed political wisdom, and the site was also well chosen with regard to certain strategic considerations. Wars of expansion netted for David a small empire, a development made possible by the temporary debilitation of the Near East's greater powers (and doomed upon their ultimate revival). The Biblical authors, whose interests are far more theological than historical, treat both these conquests and the governing of David's empire rather spottily. A war with the Ammonites and their Aramaean allies is described in some detail, but, apparently, mostly as a setting for the story of David's disposing of Uriah the Hittite, so as to steal his wife Bathsheba (Joab was helpful, as always). The revolt of Absalom and related incidents are reported at length, also, but here, again, the purpose seems to be largely homiletic. Otherwise, many eventful years — thirty-three of reigning in Jerusalem, if the figure provided be correct — have left few traces in the Biblical narrative, and occurrences in David's earlier rebel period have been interspersed in the history of his reign as king. One obvious fact is David's dependence, throughout at least the later part of his reign, on mercenary troops, many of them non-Israelites.⁸

For the Chronicler, David personally established virtually the entire religious organization of the Israelite state, and even left to his son, Solomon, full plans for the building of his temple. Samuel/Kings is more moderate and more useful as a source for David's religious activities. There is clearly no reason to doubt that he intended to foster the cult of Yahweh, to focus it in Jerusalem, and to attach it to himself and his family. The elaborate conveying of the Ark, emblematic of the old twelve-tribe amphictyony, into his new capital was a carefully staged bit of religious statecraft. On the other hand, it is equally clear that, whereas David built himself a palace, he did *not* build Yahweh a temple. Perhaps Nathan's

7. Joab and Abner: II Sam. 2:17-23; 3:21-39. Victory for David: I Chr. 11:4-8; II Sam. 12:26-29; cf. I Chr. 20:1. Deathbed advice: I Kg. 2:5-6, 28-34. Absalom: II Sam. 18:9-15; 19:6-9, 14.

8. Kingship: II Sam. 5:1-5; I Chr. 11:1-3; 12:23-40; II Sam. 19:10-18, 41-44; 20. Jerusalem: II Sam. 5:6-9; I Chr. 11:4-8; Noth (above n. 1), p. 190 discusses strengths and weaknesses. Spotty treatment: M. Smith, *HTR* (above n. 1), pp. 168-169 discusses inclusions and omissions. Ammonites, etc.: II Sam. 10-12; cf. I Chr. 19:1-20:3. Absalom, etc.: II Sam. 13-20. 33 Years: II Sam. 5:5; I Chr. 3:5; 29:27. Interspersed events: II Sam. 5:17-25; 8; 21; 23:8-24:9; I Chr. 14:8-17; 18-20. Mercenaries: II Sam. 8:18; 11:3, 24; 15:18; 20:7, 23; 23:37, 39; I Kg. 1:38, 44; I Chr. 11:39, 41, 46-47; 18:17.

prophecy — which might be freely paraphrased as “Don’t build me a house (temple), I’ll build you a house (dynasty)” — is authentic. But the “prophecy” could just as easily be a device to explain away, retrospectively, a rather glaring omission in the program of the founder of Yahweh’s chosen dynasty.⁹

The lament over the slain Saul and Jonathan, attributed to David, may actually tell us something about David’s own beliefs. One version of its apparently textually problematic prescript is translated as follows: “It is written in the Book of the Just, so that it may be taught to the sons of Judah.” The named source and the apparent restriction to David’s own tribe argue for the antiquity of the poem. If any verses preserved in Samuel/Kings are authentic works of David, this passage has perhaps the strongest claim. In it, we find anti-Philistine ethnocentrism (good politics for Saul’s would-be successor, even though he was a Philistine vassal at the time), high praise for Saul (more good politics), *eros* for Jonathan — and no mention whatever of Yahweh (or of any other god). In so far as the tone is not what we might call “secular,” its “religion” seems to concern natural phenomena: “O mountains of Gilboa, / let there be no dew or rain on you; / nor the outpouring of the Depths.”¹⁰ This is only the vaguest and most unreliable of hints, but it may be strengthened by connecting it with the familiar passage describing David’s behavior when the Ark was brought into Jerusalem:

And David danced whirling round before Yahweh with all his might, wearing a linen loincloth round him. . . . Michal . . . saw King David leaping and dancing before Yahweh; and she despised him in her heart. . . . “What a fine reputation the king of Israel has won himself today,” she said “displaying himself under the eyes of his servants’ maids, as any buffoon might display himself.” David answered Michal, “I was dancing for Yahweh, not for them. . . . I shall dance before Yahweh and demean myself even more. In your eyes I may be base, but by the maids you speak of I shall be held in honour.”

What may underlie this story is a Canaanite (Jebusite?) fertility ritual. Perhaps the king’s entertainment of the “maids” (local priestesses, sacred prostitutes?) was more than merely visual. The distribution, at the same ceremony, of bread, dates, and a raisin cake — to each woman as well as to

9. Chronicles’s view: I Chr. 6:16; 9:22; 16:4-7, 37-43; 22:5-6; 23:26-27; 25:1; 26:32; 28 and 29. Ark to Jerusalem: II Sam. 6:12-19; I Chr. 15:1-16:3. Palace but no temple: II Sam. 5:11; I Chr. 14:1; II Chr. 2:2; I Kg. 5:16-17. Prophecy: II Sam. 7:1-17; I Chr. 17:1-15.

10. The usual rendering of stich b in the commentaries and translations, “fields of offerings” is meaningless. The rendering in the text above is based on the work of H.L. Ginsberg (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 57 [1938]: 209 ff.) and Robert Gordis (*Journal of Theological Studies*, 41 [1940]: 35 ff.), reprinted in a volume of his collected papers, *The Word and the Book, Studies in Biblical Language and Literature* (New York, 1976, pp. 324 ff.). On the basis of a striking parallel in Ugaritic, Ginsberg emended the words *uš’dēh l’rumôt* to *uš’šera^c l’hômôt*. Gordis pointed out that the emendation of the first word, which, incidentally, creates a *hapax legomenon*, is unnecessary; all that is required is to revocalize the word as *š’diy l’hômôt* from the Aramaic root *šdy* which also occurs in Hebrew, and means “pour.” The phrase “outpouring of the depths” refers to the subterranean channels, (see Gen. 49:25).

every man — may strengthen this supposition. David was apparently incorporating Jebusite elements into Israelite religious traditions — or perhaps vice versa! Such a context would make more sense of the intensity of Michal's reaction than interpreting it as some kind of "Victorian" response to the flashing of a bit of skin; it would also explain her pointed reference to David as "the king of Israel." This state of affairs would naturally have to be suppressed by the Biblical authors.¹¹

To suggest that David was a religious syncretist is hardly radical. Both Saul and Jonathan had sons with theophoric names in "-baal," Solomon certainly practiced syncretism, and most of the kings of Israel and Judah are denounced by the Biblical authors for such practices. David has become the paragon of undiluted Yahwism for the good theological reason that the founder of the "golden age" *must* be. But the historical King David ruled from his still-Jebusite capital over a state which incorporated many non-Israelites. Toleration, indeed, syncretism, was the only viable policy for him, even if his inclinations had been otherwise; it was presumably no accident, for example, that he built his altar to Yahweh on a Jebusite's threshing-floor.¹² Some scholars believe, in fact, that one of the major Biblical tradition-complexes, that associated with Mt. Zion, was taken over from the Jebusites, though it has also been plausibly argued that the chief elements of the tradition are Davidic or Solomonic creations. Whichever is the case, reverence for a "holy mountain" in the immediate vicinity of his capital was obviously beneficial to David both religiously and politically. The displacement, in both Samuel/Kings and Chronicles, of battles with the Philistines which apparently occurred prior to David's capture of Jerusalem to a position in the text *after* its capture can be seen as an attempt to incorporate an element of the Zion tradition (the holy city attacked by the "nations") into the "historical record."¹³

David as king was also, in some senses, a priest, and his direct involvement in cultic matters is stressed by the Biblical authors. His eating of the consecrated bread of Nob, while he was a fugitive from Saul, is presumably intended to emphasize his own peculiar sanctity, while Saul's impiety is made manifest in his slaughtering of the priests there for aiding David. In the list of royal officials in Samuel/Kings, it is said that "David's sons

11. II Sam. 6:12-23. The loincloth becomes "a cloak of fine linen" in the version of I Chr. 15:25-16:3, where "David also wore the linen ephod;" Michal still despises David, though no conversation is described, nor is any motivation suggested except that she saw him "dancing and exultant," but men and women still each receive bread, dates, and a raisin cake.

12. "-Baal" names: I Chr. 8:33-34; 9:39-40; cf. I Sam. 14:49; II Sam. 2:8; 4:4; 9:6; etc. Solomon: I Kg. 11:4-8. Elements of empire: Noth (above n. 1), p. 197. Threshing-floor: II Sam. 24:18-25; I Chr. 21:18-28; M. Smith points out (letter to author, Sept. 9, 1984) that neither David nor Solomon actually built a temple of Yahweh within the Jebusite city; its god(s) retained this domain (Solomon built his temple outside, then enclosed it within a new wall).

13. Zion tradition in general: J.J.M. Roberts, "The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition," *JBL*, 92 (1973): 329-344. Displacement: II Sam. 5:17-25; I Chr. 14:8-16.

were priests.”¹⁴ Could it be that the king was not only part priest, but, also, part god? When David captured the Ammonite city of Rabbah, “He took the crown from the head of Milcom; . . . in it was set a precious stone which made an ornament for David’s head.” Milcom was a god; what does this gesture imply about David? All those in the assembly of Israel are elsewhere said to have gone “on their knees to do homage to Yahweh and to the king.” Certainly, the notion that the king’s life is uniquely valuable and vital to his people’s survival, too important to risk in battle, reflects an attitude very different from that implicit in the Messianic warrior-kinship of Saul.¹⁵

The David stories concern the foundation of a “perpetual” dynasty, but David’s family life was far from tranquil. In a society of patriarchal clans, we would, of course, expect whatever “political” power there was to follow family lines rather closely. At a certain stage in his career, David would naturally have desired a marriage alliance with Saul, whether he attained it (as the Biblical text says) in his early days as a commander under Saul, or only extorted from Ishbaal the hand of his sister, Michal, in the period of struggle after Saul’s death. Especially if the latter were the case, the attested hostility between Michal and David (see above) is very believable. That she bore him no children may well have been David’s choice; if so, it probably indicates that — beyond whatever help the marriage gave him in becoming established as king of both Judah and Israel — he had no intention of making his dynasty in any way dependent on a connection with Saul. David appropriated his predecessor’s concubines, as seems to have become standard practice among rulers and would-be rulers in Israel as elsewhere. His murderous treatment of Saul’s family is well attested, allowing for an exception in the case of Meribbaal, the crippled son of his beloved Jonathan.¹⁶ David relied, in fact, on his own relatives, beginning with “his brothers and all his father’s family,” during the days when he was an outlaw pursued by Saul. Joab and his brother Abishai, David’s chief commanders virtually throughout his reign, are said to have been the sons of David’s sister, i.e., his nephews. Amasa, who briefly (and fatally) replaced Joab, was another nephew, the son of a different

14. Nob events: I Sam. 21:2-7; 22:9-23. Sons as priests: II Sam. 8:18; cf. I Chr. 18:17, which, intent on justifying the Levites’ control of priesthoods, alters the meaning to “David’s sons held the first place at the king’s side”.

15. “Milcom” in this translation of I Sam. 12:30 (as in I Chr. 20:2 and Jer. 49:1, 3) is a widely-adopted emendation, based on the Greek Septuagint, for a Hebrew word whose traditional vocalization would yield *malkam* (“their king”); the emendation seems reasonable, since the crown is said to have weighed “one talent of gold,” and since I Kg. 11:5 and II Kg. 23:13 make it clear that Milcom was an Ammonite deity (see also Zeph. 1:5). Homage: I Chr. 29:20. King’s unique value: II Sam. 18:2-4; 21:17.

16. Michal: I Sam. 18:17-27; 19:11-17; 25:44; II Sam. 3:13-16; 6:16-23; I Chr. 15:29; Noth (above n. 1), p. 184 n. 1 argues for the later date for the marriage. Concubines: II Sam. 3:7-8; 12:8; 15:16; 16:21-22; 20:3; 21:8-11; I Kg. 2:13-22; I Chr. 3:9. Saul’s family: II Sam. 9:16:1-8; 19:25-31; 21:1-14.

sister; Joab is said to have greeted him as “my brother” just before stabbing him.¹⁷

David ultimately fathered a large progeny by numerous wives. In addition to the childless Michal, his wives included Abigail of Carmel (see above) and Ahinoam of Jezreel, both of whom he married during his fugitive period. Both are said to have borne him sons while he reigned at Hebron; the same is said of Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah. In Jerusalem, “David took other concubines and wives;” of the sons of these wives (not the concubines), if we may believe Chronicles, four were borne by Bathsheba; the others’ mothers are unspecified. David’s last concubine, Abishag of Shunem, bore him no sons, since (the Biblical text tells us) despite her great beauty, the now aged and impotent king “had no intercourse with her.”¹⁸ Bathsheba is the best-known of the wives, partly because of the famous story of the king’s taking her from her husband, Uriah the Hittite. It is rather amusing to be told that, in a time and place where infant mortality must have been stratospherically high, David’s “punishment” for sending Uriah to his death and impregnating his wife was the death of the bastard child. Nathan is said to have made this lofty pronouncement.¹⁹ Later, Bathsheba became the mother of Solomon, David’s successor on the throne. The very fact that he was designated probably indicates that she was David’s favorite wife, since, to all appearances, Solomon’s claims were otherwise weak.

David was neither fortunate in his sons nor wise in dealing with them. The eldest, Amnon, son of Ahinoam, is said to have raped his half-sister Tamar, despite the reported possibility, had he been more patient, of marrying her. David, though informed of the outrage, did nothing. Absalom, son of Maacah, apparently Tamar’s full brother, finally avenged her by killing Amnon, for which deed he had to flee to his maternal grandfather, King Talmai of Geshur, to escape David’s wrath. Even after a stratagem of Joab induced David to allow him to return, he was, for some time, kept at a distance from the king. Reconciliation came, but apparently too late: Absalom began intriguing against his father, ultimately rising in open rebellion. The crisis, amounting essentially to a revolt of his own tribe of Judah, was so serious that David was forced to flee from the capital.²⁰ Only the loyalty of his professional soldiers enabled him to recover his throne. Yet he seemingly blamed Joab more for the death of Absalom than he blamed his son for staging the revolt. The rebellion also stirred up Northern secessionist movements, which Joab

17. Outlaw days: I Sam. 22:1; we may safely doubt the story in I Chr. 12:1-8 that many of Saul’s kinsmen joined David in this period. Nephews: I Chr. 2:16-17; II Sam. 17:25; 19:14. Amasa’s death: II Sam. 20:8-10.

18. I Sam. 25:40-43; II Sam. 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 12:24; 15:16; I Chr. 3:1-9; 14:3-7; I Kg. 1:1-4.

19. II Sam. 11:1-12:23.

20. II Sam. 13-16; note that I Kg. 1:6 (cf. II Sam. 3:3; I Chr. 3:2) makes Absalom a son of Haggith.

also had to suppress.²¹ In David's dotage, Adonijah, his son by Haggith, had himself proclaimed king, though David still lived; his clique included the formidable Joab. Nathan the prophet seems to have been the organizer of the counter-conspiracy, whereby Bathsheba "reminded" David of his promise to designate her son Solomon as his successor. The old king's explicit support, which carried with it that of the royal mercenaries and the population of Jerusalem, ultimately determined the issue, and Adonijah was forced to avail himself of Solomon's mercy. His fate, however, soon matched Joab's (see above).²²

King David has received well-deserved praise for his political and military accomplishments. His achievement, in the summary of one eminent scholar, "was, from his tribal, Judean power base, to build a complex, non-tribal, non-Judean state in central and eastern Palestine and western Trans-Jordan".²³ But David has also generally been exempted from criticism for the ways he treated those around him, or his behavior has been justified because he was supposedly following (or embodying) some sort of greater-than-normal, divinely inspired "vision."

The foregoing discussion attempts to examine the Biblical narratives without a pro-David or pro-Davidic-dynasty justificatory bias. The issue here is not whether or not David believed that he acted with Yahweh's approval and assistance. Presumably he usually *did* believe it. Rulers and conquerors have almost always claimed divine support and, doubtless, in many cases have believed their own claims. The subject matter here is, rather, David's behavior, what he *did*, in so far as that can be discovered. That is what must be described plainly and clearly, before one can assess his behavior in terms that are intelligible to readers who do not share his own, or the Biblical narrators', presuppositions. The picture here presented is that of a talented and ambitious commander who was willing to take Saul's pay and his daughter (and perhaps his son), but who rose in rebellion against him, going so far as to become a vassal of Saul's Philistine enemies. The insane suspiciousness of Saul and the pivotal role of Samuel in these developments are questioned, and it is suggested that retrospective justification by pro-Davidic narrators may have created both. The Biblical writers' exculpations of David for the deaths of all who stood in his way have also been treated with some suspicion. Given the explicit attribution of responsibility to David in the case of Uriah the Hittite, how often should we believe that one man could repeatedly benefit from the misdeeds of others without having had a hand in encouraging those misdeeds? David as religious syncretist (perhaps even with some personal pretensions to divinity) is more believable, it is here suggested, than David as practitioner of an "undiluted" Yahwism that probably did not even

21. Soldiers' loyalty: II Sam. 15:18-22; 17:8-10; 18:1-17. Joab blamed: II Sam. 19:1-14. Northern rebellions suppressed: II Sam. 16:1-13; 20:1-2, 4-22.

22. I Kg. 1:1-2:35.

23. M. Smith, letter (above n. 12).

exist in his time and was, in any case, rarely (if ever) embodied in royal policy in Judah or Israel. Finally, David as father and family leader is seen as having exhibited alternatively irresponsible neglect and destructive indulgence.

Can such a flawed historical figure have prompted the degree of affection, respect, and devotion that David has attained in the Judeo-Christian tradition? Certainly — though a description of precisely how that development occurred is not the subject here. David *won* the struggle with Saul, he founded the enduring dynasty, he established the capital that became the Holy City. Admirers of David and/or clients of his dynasty wrote the records and interpreted remembered events in ways that they believed appropriate and effective for their purposes. But those purposes did *not* include the preservation of a historical record that would meet the standards of persons not sharing their theistic outlook, either in terms of completeness or of adequacy in explaining causation. It is better not to credit them with succeeding at a task that they never undertook to perform.

Authority and Authenticity in Jewish Philosophy

NEIL GILLMAN

AN EARLIER PAPER¹ STUDYING THE ROLE OF the Jewish philosopher in our contemporary setting made the following claims:

1. The classical role of the Jewish philosopher has been to address the “marginal” Jew of his generation in order to make a sophisticated, coherent case for Jewish identity in terms of the intellectual challenges and specific vocabulary of that generation. In this context, “marginality” signifies the awareness that Jewish identity has become problematic either because of competing ideological options or because some momentous historical event has rendered the received tradition anachronistic.

2. This description of the role of Jewish philosophy clarifies some of the classic characteristics of the Jewish philosophical tradition: its pluralism, its openness to the outside world, the relative ease with which any formulation becomes dated and the suspicion with which it is greeted by the Jew who is “at home” with his Jewishness.

3. Jewish philosophy can then be understood as a midrash, as much a testimony to its cultural setting as to the so-called “eternal” truths of Judaism. In turn, each philosophical statement becomes part of the “text” for the next generation’s midrash.

4. This identification of Jewish philosophy as midrash, however, puts into question the authority of the original formulation of Jewish belief and practice in the Torah. It confirms Abraham Joshua Heschel’s suggestion that the Torah itself be viewed as a midrash, a human formulation of some more primitive content which is itself inaccessible to human comprehension or expression.

5. A more contemporary formulation of this claim understands Torah as the classic, complex myth of the Jewish people. A myth is not a deliberate fiction but, rather, a partial, impressionistic construct which evolves out of a community and serves it in various ways: to create identity, to generate loyalty, to motivate to action. It is the structure of meaning which the community uses to read its historical experience and it generates scriptures, rituals and liturgies which serve to canonize, concretize, celebrate and transmit the myth from generation to generation. As with a

1. JUDAISM, 34,4 (Fall 1985): 474-484. An earlier version of this paper was presented in November 1983 as an address titled “Legitimacy, Heterodoxy and Heresy: A Jewish Theological Inquiry,” under the sponsorship of The New York Board of Rabbis.

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midrash, a myth has its own life-span; it lives, dies and is revised as the community moves through history.

6. Finally, this notion of a Jewish philosophy as a myth/midrash raises the issues of authority and authenticity. Judaism has evolved clear-cut ways of determining what is authoritative in matters of practice. There is no parallel formula in matters of belief. What constitutes an authentic Jewish philosophical claim? What would make another claim heterodoxical or even heretical? Who decides?

The issue is particularly acute in our day. Those of us who teach contemporary Jewish philosophy must deal with the writings of a number of thinkers, each of whom has been assailed as teaching an inauthentic version of Judaism. The most notable example is Mordecai Kaplan, whose naturalist theology is radical and unprecedented. Strangely enough, though, when Kaplan was excommunicated in 1944 by a group of Orthodox Rabbis, it was because of the halakhic changes that he introduced into his edition of the Prayerbook and not for the theological views which inspired those changes and which had been published a decade earlier in his *Judaism as a Civilization*. And what should we make of Martin Buber, for whom the *mizvot* are an obstacle to the genuine religious experience? Or of Franz Rosenzweig, whose existentialist approach to the *mizvot* permits the individual Jew to decide which *mizvah* to observe and when? Or of Richard Rubenstein, who insists that the only possible theological response to the Holocaust is to proclaim “the death of God”? Even Abraham Joshua Heschel, whose reading of Judaism is suffused with biblical and rabbinic motifs, is attacked by one contemporary thinker who sees Heschel’s description of the divine “pathos” as unduly influenced by Christianity.² And, more recently, what should be made of Harold Kushner’s *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, which rests on the decidedly non-traditional notion of a limited God?

It is clear that the crux of the issue is how we deal with the theological issue of revelation, for how we understand it dictates how we deal with the question of authority in Jewish belief and practice.

The decisive claim of the contemporary traditionalist (though not necessarily “traditional”) view is the dogma of verbal revelation.³ This view understands, as literal, the biblical statement that “God spoke” to Moses and to the biblical community. Hence, the Torah contains the

2. See Eliezer Berkovits’ “Dr. A.J. Heschel’s Theology of Pathos,” in his *Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism* (New York: KTAV, 1974), pp. 192-224.

3. A particularly clear and unambiguous statement of the traditionalist position and its implications is found in Norman Lamm’s contribution to *The Condition of Jewish Belief*, a symposium compiled by the editors of *Commentary* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), pp. 124-126. The position, in its modern garb, can be traced to Samson Raphael Hirsch. See, e.g., his “Religion Allied to Progress,” in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, edited by Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 177-181. Hirsch is clearly the theological father of modern Jewish traditionalism.

explicit word of God and its authority is tight and closed. Invariably, one is led to measure the authority of any further formulation by its correspondence with the formulations of the Torah.

But, once the dogma of verbal revelation is called into question, the issue of authority has to be looked at anew. That denial can be based on a number of different considerations. In Heschel's writings, it stems from his contention that God is intrinsically beyond any human categorization; all claims about God, then, have to be understood as human accommodations, including the claim that He "spoke" to the Jewish people.⁴ A second consideration would be the evidence of the multitude of biblical borrowings from ancient near-eastern literature. A third would be the difficulties inherent in using the Bible as a theological source-book. On many central issues, it is either silent or ambiguous; on others, it speaks in many voices. The God of the Genesis narratives is not the God of classical prophecy or of the Psalms. Which is *the* biblical view? Which is authoritative? Or, finally, consider the way in which the authors of Jonah 4 and Psalm 103 edit the "words" of Exodus 34:6-7 ("uttered," it should be noted, by God Himself) to proclaim their own view of how God deals with the sins of human beings.⁵ Any or all of these considerations could lead to a denial of verbal revelation and to some variation of a position which acknowledges a significant and substantive human contribution to the formulation of Torah. But any such alternative decisively diminishes the status of Torah as authority for our theological claims.

We should begin by proceeding inductively.

First, an example where the Jewish community did reach a decision that a specific midrash was not authentic. It is clear that, in the first century of the common era, a group of Jews argued with passion and skill that their understanding of the career of Jesus of Nazareth marked the beginning of the long-awaited eschatological age, that God's promises of redemption had begun to be fulfilled and that Jews should accept Jesus as the Messiah whose death on the cross granted vicarious atonement for the sins of humanity. This interpretation of the career of Jesus has all of the hallmarks of a midrash. It was presented as a new and authentic reading of Judaism and was buttressed with manifold references to specific verses in the Pentateuch and in prophetic literature that were interpreted as foretelling events that were to occur centuries later. There is no questioning the eagerness of these first Christians to have the Jewish community accept this midrash as an authentically Jewish reading of the events of the age. The community's refusal to do so led, eventually, to the break of

4. *God in Search of Man* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), pp. 194ff. and 257ff.

5. That the latter, in particular, is a clear midrash on the Ex. 34 passage can be seen by comparing Psalm 103:7 and Exodus 33:13. The *selihot* liturgy uses, as its core passage, Ex. 34:6-7 as edited by the later biblical passages, a particularly striking instance of quoting God back to God — but editing His "words" in the process!

the early Church with Judaism and the Jewish people and, parenthetically, thereby insured Christianity's success as an independent religion.⁶

One wonders, however, how the Jewish community reached its decision. We have no explicit record of the internal debate within the Jewish world. What were the issues? What was deemed inauthentic or untrue? Part of the answer is that the historical events of the period did not correspond to the messianic scenario as described in prophetic literature. But, beyond this, we may surmise that early Christianity, at least as it is reflected in the writings of Paul, was perceived as undermining two indispensable Jewish claims: first, that the Jewish people played the central role in God's salvational plan for the world, thus providing the theological basis for Jewish identity; and second, that the fulfillment of *the law* (though not necessarily of any one specific law) was the unique and indispensable source of authenticity before God. The dynamics of the internal debate within the community were never recorded. All we know is that, ultimately, most of the Jewish community said "no" and world history was never the same.

Christianity represents one significant and rare episode when a theological dispute within the Jewish community reached a final resolution. More frequently, disputes of this kind rage unchecked, sometimes for generations.

From the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, for example, Jewry was wracked by an extended controversy that focused on the teachings of Maimonides. The dispute involved, on one side or the other, just about every significant Jewish authority of the age. The issues were Maimonides' attempt to synthesize revelational and philosophical (rational) truth, his critique of biblical and Talmudic anthropomorphisms, his wish to have his *Mishneh Torah* supplant the Talmud as the basis for halakhic decision making, and some of his theological claims, such as his denial of the ultimate resurrection of the body. For three centuries all of these issues were passionately debated, with letters, sermons, commentaries and bans following each other on both sides of the issue. When the dust cleared, relatively little had changed. The *Mishneh Torah* remained one of the two major codifications of Jewish law, though it never supplanted the Talmud. The *Guide* remained the towering accomplishment that it was, ignored by those who did not share its agenda, rejected by others who were repelled by its approach and, all the same, making it possible for still others to maintain their integrity as Jews despite the intellectual challenges of the age.

A similar pattern surrounded the controversy over Hasidism at the end of the 18th century. Here, again, the issues were clear: Hasidism's

6. A suggestive parallel to the problems involved in producing and abandoning a midrash is seen in Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962 and 1970), particularly pp. 77-91. In general, what Kuhn has to say about scientific paradigms applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to myths and midrashim.

indifference to rabbinic intellectualism, its stress on ecstatic prayer and on the Zaddik as a wonder-working charismatic leader, and its barely submerged antinomianism were viewed by its opponents as a heritage of dreaded Sabbateanism. All of these kindled the wrath of the rabbinic authorities of the age. Again books were burned, excommunications were decreed and opponents denounced to secular authorities, leading to the arrest and imprisonment of a number of Hasidic leaders. But, again, nothing was ever really resolved. Hasidism remains one of the more creative movements in modern Jewish history, having left lasting impressions on our liturgy and our religious life to this day. At least two contemporary Jewish theologians, Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel, were decisively influenced by its modes of thought. These currents swirled through Jewish life, awakening violent passions, but, on the level of ideas, at least, nothing was resolved.

If this review has served any purpose, it should confirm three claims: first, that Jewish philosophers always enjoyed an unusual degree of freedom to formulate their own readings of Judaism without fear of final condemnation, however much disapproval their views may have aroused; second, there is no self-verifying model of what Judaism is supposed to teach on any one of a number of central theological issues; and third, neither is there any self-verifying authority figure in any one generation who can pass decisively on the authenticity of a Jewish philosophical statement apart from the philosopher himself and his philosophically concerned audience. In short, the picture is one of relative openness, flexibility, pluralism and freedom.

Obviously, there were limits to this freedom, but as soon as we try to specify what they are, we quickly discover that we cannot get much beyond a few relatively simplistic claims. We may all agree, for example, that an authentic Jew cannot deny the existence of God. but it is utterly meaningless to affirm or deny God's existence without specifying what kind of God it is whose existence we are affirming or denying. To some medievals, to affirm the existence of the Maimonidean God was tantamount to atheism. As soon as we try to define God more narrowly, the issue is no longer so clear-cut.

Again, no doctrine is more central to Jewish faith than the unity of God. But sixteenth-century Jewish mysticism taught that God had two aspects: God-in-Himself or the *Ein-Sof*, the hidden God, and God as *Shekhinah*, as revealed in, and through, Creation. Furthermore, these mystics affirmed that, in history, these two aspects of God have been split asunder — they called it “the exile of God” — and that it is the Jew's responsibility to re-unite them and, hence, to redeem God by the performance of *mizvot*. Is such a theology dualistic? It would seem so on the surface, though, of course, the mystics would vigorously deny such an interpretation.

Finally, the existence of Christianity as an independent faith may well convince us that no authentic reading of Judaism could possibly

undermine the authority of Jewish law as binding on all Jews at all times. But there is surely an antinomian thrust in the familiar Hasidic tales of the ignorant shepherd boy who pipes on his flute or recites the alphabet and asks God to string the letters together to form a prayer which, we are assured, is more precious to God because of the lad's devotion, than are the impeccably halakhically-structured prayers of the learned rabbinic authorities.

As soon as we move beyond broad, simplistic generalizations, the criteria lose their clarity and usefulness. Whatever need the community may have felt to impose structure and discipline on its religious life was amply met by halakhah, which regimented the behavior of the Jew in minute detail. Matters of belief were, by and large, left untouched. The most notable instance of an attempt to impose a belief-structure on the community was Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith. True to his intellectual predilections, Maimonides wanted to prescribe the minimal beliefs that should be incumbent on every authentic Jew. But both the very attempt itself and the specific principles were bitterly criticized and the proposal achieved no official standing.

How are we to evaluate these midrashim? It should be clear by now that there is no ultimate standard by which we can judge their legitimacy as readings of Judaism. With due caution, then, we suggest that the only test that may be fairly applied is one that relates to the motivation behind all of these philosophies of Judaism, that evaluates them in terms of their success or failure in achieving what they originally were designed for. If we agree that the function of any philosophy of Judaism is to make identification with Judaism possible for a generation of Jews for whom it has become problematic, then a legitimate reading of Judaism is one that effectively does just that. The phrase "identification with Judaism" should be left purposely vague. It might have been possible, in the past, to insist that identification with Judaism should be concretized by observance of the halakhah. But it is clear that a number of contemporary thinkers, whose philosophy has had a wide impact among Jews, would not fit this mold, and we wonder what purpose would be served by ruling their writings out of a contemporary curriculum of Jewish philosophy.

In place of "identification with *the* halakhah," we would substitute "identification with *a* halakhah," that is, a behavioral system which is recognized as rigorous and obligatory and which serves to concretize one's Jewish identity. It has become progressively difficult, in our day, to view halakhah as one totally coherent system, and "halakhic Jews" as forming one coherent community. We have become much more conscious of the plurality of overlapping halakhic frameworks and communities even within contemporary Orthodoxy itself, let alone within the broader community of "observant" Jews. If, anything, in our day, we would want to accentuate the legitimacy of such multiple frameworks, even if some of them seem to place almost exclusive emphasis on the interpersonal, com-

munal and social-action dimensions of observance over the ritual. What remains mandatory, however, are the three criteria noted above: rigor, a sense of obligation, and an understanding that this behavioral pattern serves to concretize and express identity with Judaism.

Beyond that, since we consider each of these statements to be midrash, we should also insist that they exhibit the characteristics of a midrash: first, that they be based on a "text," on previous, recognized consolidations of Jewish belief, however broadly these may be reinterpreted in the process. Second, they should speak to the contemporary situation in its entirety. The reality is, for example, that there was a Holocaust in Europe in the 1940s and that the State of Israel was created in May of 1948. No midrash that does not take these two events into account can speak convincingly to the contemporary Jew.

But it is clear that these two desiderata are in tension. Indeed, every midrash is in danger of being either inauthentic or irrelevant. That is its peculiar fate; it is inherently unsatisfactory. It risks offending the traditionalist who wonders why we need a new formulation in the first place, or the liberal who feels the need for an even more radical break with the received tradition. The issue of authenticity, then, is even more troublesome than that of authority. Indeed, a case can be made for the claim that an excessive preoccupation with authenticity can doom a midrash. On the other hand, not every possible position on any issue is legitimate. As we have seen, however, it is well nigh impossible to delineate, *ab initio*, parameters of authenticity that are anything but simplistic.

The following additional points should be made in this regard. First, the threat of anachronism or irrelevancy is far more dangerous than that of inauthenticity. Our religious consolidations are inherently conservative and we tend to cling to them long after they have become patently outdated. See, for example, how difficult it is to eliminate from the liturgy prayers for the return to Zion and to Jerusalem, though we are perfectly free to return if we only decide to do so. The trauma involved in breaking with a long and deeply felt tradition is genuine and the difficulties involved in creating a new one are inordinately complex. Second, we have to assume that the process of rewriting the midrash is undertaken with seriousness of purpose, with fear and trembling, with piety and with learning. These are not *intrinsic* criteria of authenticity but they remain criteria all the same and serve to shape the outcome. Third, we have to assume a basic commitment to the survival and vitality of the Jewish civilization and that it is the impetus behind the entire enterprise. Fourth, every midrash begins with, and departs from, a text. Midrashim are canonized in texts that carry an inherent sanctity precisely because they are the repository of the *raison d'être* of the religious community. Whatever we say about revelation, the Torah remains the Torah, written on a scroll, housed in an ark and copied and read meticulously in the synagogue. Rabbinic literature and the liturgy, though of a lower level of sanctity,

function in a similar capacity. Canonized texts are inherently coercive. They have enormous power to influence the way we see the world and to do so almost unconsciously — so much are they part of our very being. They are elevated above history and thus become almost automatic guarantors of continuity. But it should be remembered that the canonization of Scripture was the work of the Jewish community itself. Our proposal, then, is no longer radically innovative.

It is noteworthy that the pragmatic criterion by which we test the authenticity of a midrash is identical with the criterion proposed for the truth or falsity of a myth.⁷

A myth is never objectively true or false; it comes into being precisely because the reality which it tries to capture or respond to is not directly apprehensible. Take an example from science. Freudian psychoanalytic theory is an elaborate myth designed to explain the “inner” or psychic make-up of the human person. This portrait is not true or false, in the sense that it captures in a literal way just what the human psyche looks like. The notion of a psyche itself is part of the myth, as are the “unconscious,” the “id,” “ego” or “superego,” or the various drives that impel us to act in certain ways. Freud’s myth is true or false if it works, that is, if it enables us to understand, predict, control and, ultimately, cure. If it is to be abandoned, it will be because another equally mythical formulation does a better job of all of this.

Religious myths differ from scientific ones in many notable ways. Their goal is not so much to explain, predict and control but, rather, to establish the identity of a community, to mobilize it to act, to generate loyalty and emotion and, most of all, to deal with the question of the ultimate meaning of the human experience as it is understood by that community. But, like a scientific myth, the criterion of truth or falsity for a religious myth is pragmatic. Does it function for a new generation as it did for the old? Does it continue to live? Have segments of it died? If so, the myth must be revised, or, to use the technical term, remythologized.

A myth can live or die or it can be “broken,” that is, recognized as a myth. This is the unique experience of many of our contemporaries. When it happens, the proper alternative is neither a blind, naive return to precritical literalism nor an abandonment of the entire enterprise of religion.⁸ It is, rather, the recognition that the issue is not myth or no myth but, rather, which myth, for myth-making is the inevitable lot of human beings who confront realities that they can neither directly grasp nor

7. All that follows stems from the seminal statement on religious language as mythical in Paul Tillich’s *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

8. See *Dynamics of Faith*, pp. 51-54 and James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), pp. 184ff. Particularly suggestive is Fowler’s characterization of this post-critical stage as a “second naivete” or “willed naivete.” The terms were originally Paul Ricoeur’s.

comprehend. A myth is simply the single indispensable tool for dealing with the ultimate dimensions of human experience.

This pragmatic test may explain why the early Christian myth/midrash was rejected by the Jews of the first century of our era. As we saw above, there is no question but that to accept Paul's reading of the events of the first decades of that century was tantamount to accepting the demise of the classical Jewish myth and, with it, of the Jewish community as a distinct ethnic group. However much Paul attempted to authenticate his interpretation of the events in Jesus' life by appeal to passages in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Jewish people accurately perceived the ultimate effect of his enterprise as fatal to their existence as a group. Hence their rejection. The case of the seventeenth century, Dutch Jewish philosopher, Baruch Spinoza, who was excommunicated by his community, is remarkably similar. Though political considerations may have played a significant role in the community's decision, Spinoza taught that Judaism as a revealed religion should be replaced by a universal religion based on reason alone. Here, again, the Jewish community accurately perceived the effect of this philosophy as fatal to Judaism. These represent two significant examples where the Jewish community, consciously or not, invoked this pragmatic test to invalidate a philosophy of Judaism, and these two instances are particularly striking because they are almost unique in Jewish intellectual history.

Note well, parenthetically, that to identify our formulations of Jewish belief as myth in no way diminishes their authority over us. Once they become canonized, myths acquire immense power. They become a community's totally intuitive framework for sorting out and organizing its experience. The longer they endure, the more difficult it is to elude their control, to see the world, so to speak, through different spectacles. Job and Harold Kushner offer two vivid examples of the way in which a portion of the myth, namely, that which tries to account for apparently unjustified suffering, died for two believing Jews. They pitted their personal experience against the received tradition and found the latter wanting. In the process, Torah was remythologized. Many of us are struggling with the same process in the light of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. But the pain involved in this process provides ample testimony to the power of ancient myths as sources of authority and guarantors of authenticity.

Who decides whether or not a contemporary midrash is, or is not, authentically Jewish? We know how halakhic decisions are reached. But what about philosophy? In Roman Catholicism, the Pope has the authority to declare certain teachings heretical and all authentic Roman Catholics will disavow them. There is no Jewish parallel to this procedure, not only because there is no ultimate Jewish authority figure, but, also, because, as has been amply demonstrated above, philosophy plays an entirely different role in Judaism. It might have been possible, in the past,

to excommunicate Spinoza because of his philosophy, but, in our days, the fragmentation of authority within the Jewish community would make a gesture of this kind relatively ineffective. Mordecai Kaplan's excommunication, for example, did nothing to affect his standing on the faculty of The Jewish Theological Seminary or his influence within American Jewry.

It is clear that, especially in our own day, authority in matters of Jewish philosophy must be shared by the community which the philosopher is addressing. He may well influence his readers in one direction or another, but it is the consensus of learned, committed and ideologically concerned Jews who will be the ultimate arbiters of the effectiveness of his teachings. Each of the adjectives in the preceding phrase is crucial. There must be learning because the decision must be based on first-hand knowledge, both of classical Jewish sources and of the best of contemporary thought. There must be commitment because the motivation behind the entire enterprise assumes that one is intensely serious about one's Jewishness. Finally, there must be ideological concern. The Jew must feel, in the depths of his being, both the marginality of his condition in the modern world and the need to articulate, primarily for his own integrity, why he remains a Jew despite all. This consensus, in effect, votes by its decision to study and to integrate the teachings of a philosopher and thereby to find itself firmly rooted again within the Jewish community and its traditions.

It is understandable if this proposal engenders a sense of unease. Most of us want religion to deliver absolute truth, quick, decisive and final "yes" or "no" answers to ultimate issues; if religion does not provide this kind of certainty, what will? But, surely, another part of us is suspicious of those who insist that *they* know with absolute certainty what God wants us to believe. One of the glories of the Jewish philosophical tradition has always been its open, pluralistic and flexible character. It is precisely this quality that made it so powerful an instrument for those Jews in every generation who shaped its agenda. That character is, if anything, more in demand today when identification is voluntary, when our contemporaries are almost all college-educated and when the condition of "marginality," as we have defined it, is pervasive.

The reality is that, in retrospect, we are all the richer for these critical junctures in Jewish intellectual history when the parameters of what, until then, had constituted "normative" Judaism were stretched in unanticipated ways. We today venerate Isaiah, Jonah, Yohanan ben Zakkai, Maimonides, Isaac Luria and the Baal Shem Tov and do not hesitate to teach and preach their midrashim. If anything, the perspective of history should induce us to be as generous with the thinkers of our day whose experience has led them to stretch our parameters of authenticity in equally unanticipated ways.

Our constituency will not abide a closed authoritative stance on matters of belief. To insist on that will be to drive them further away, and to undermine the classical role that Jewish philosophy has always served: to bring Jews closer to God, to Torah and to Israel.

South African Judaism: An Expression of Conservative Traditionalism

JOCELYN HELLIG

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE PHENOMENON OF contemporary Judaism in South Africa conveys a picture of a community of diaspora Jews very different in essence from any other, its characteristic feature being its conservative traditionalism. Along with the more obvious manifestations of sectarian Orthodoxy which one might observe among groups like the Lubavitch (who are just as high-profile but far less numerous in Johannesburg than in New York), one would perceive, also, a large proportion of committed Jews, affiliated to Orthodoxy but with vastly varying degrees of religious observance. Historic, political and social factors have combined to create a unique blend of religious awareness and secular pragmatism. The majority of South Africa's Jews exhibit a respect for tradition, a strong attachment to Zion and, an overall "comfortableness" with the condition of being Jewish.¹

The Jewish community of South Africa is comparatively small. According to the 1980 census there were just under 120,000 Jews there, as opposed to almost six million in the United States of America and 280,000 in the city of London alone. It is the ninth and smallest distinctive religious grouping in the country, but, nevertheless, it displays a remarkable vitality and impact, and, possibly *because* of its smallness, it exhibits an unusually cohesive organisation.

More than 50% of the Jewish population resides in or near Johannesburg, which, though not a capital city, is the vital centre of South African life. Approximately 25% live in the environs of Cape Town, the rest being scattered throughout the country, inhabiting urban rather than rural areas.²

The past ten to fifteen years have witnessed a remarkable revival of

1. For a more detailed exposition of the religious dimension of South African Jews see J. Hellig, "Religious Expression," in M. Arkin (ed), *South African Jewry: A Contemporary Survey* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 95-116.

2. It is noteworthy that, in 1980, 99.3% of South African Jews inhabited urban areas. This trend continues. For general demographic trends of the Jewish population of South Africa see A. Dubb, "Demographic Picture" in Arkin, pp. 23-44.

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Jewish religious life, which is particularly apparent in Johannesburg, while certain of its suburbs have proved to be amazingly fertile ground for the proliferation of splinter groups of Orthodoxy.³ Perhaps more than in any other sphere of Jewish life, it is in the area of religious expression that a lively renaissance is most apparent. A significant indication of this vitality can be observed in the emergence of strong and growing ultra-Orthodox groups such as the Kollel and the Lubavitch,⁴ and in the current trend toward the emergence of informal "house" synagogues, *shtiblakh*. These tend to develop under the leadership of individual learned and often "charismatic" rabbis who gather groups of dedicated Jews under their helm.

At the other end of the spectrum, an increasing number of Jews are being lost to Judaism through intermarriage and secularisation. Some have been attracted to Eastern cults, or to others like the "Jews for Jesus." Conversion poses a far smaller problem in terms of numbers than do intermarriage and secularisation, and even these have not reached alarming proportions.

Despite this obvious polarisation, however, if one views South African Jewry as a whole, one cannot fail to observe its "conservative traditionalism," as noted above. There is no Conservative Jewish movement in South Africa, the Jewish population being divided religiously into two broad, but unequal streams, Orthodox and Reform (or Progressive) Judaism. By far the majority are affiliated with Orthodox congregations, as Progressive Judaism, established in 1933, seems to have arisen on fairly infertile ground in South Africa and has thus far made comparatively little headway. Unlike the United States, where there is no chief rabbi and no single central body to control religious affairs, organisational life in South African Jewish affairs is fairly centralised. Orthodox Judaism is governed by the Federation of Synagogues which has approximately seventy synagogues under its aegis. Several synagogues in the Western Cape are affiliated to the Cape United Council of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations. The reason for the existence of two bodies is that Cape Town is

3. These are the Glenhazel area in North East Johannesburg and the suburbs of Yeoville and Bellevue which adjoin one another, are older, and are located fairly near the central business district. Both of these areas are inhabited by a high percentage of Jews and there is a very obvious revival of traditional Judaism in them.

4. The word *kollel* in its usual sense designates a yeshiva for the full-time study of Torah by about a dozen males. An organisation of this type was established in 1969 in Yeoville, Johannesburg. It soon overreached its original aim. Today, the Kollel is a splinter group of ultra-Orthodox Jews which, as a community, offers many facilities centred around Torah study. Much of their work is aimed at the *baal teshuvah* or penitent. As a result of this emphasis, many previously distanced Jews have been drawn into the Kollel community.

The Lubavitch Foundation was established in South Africa in 1972 and has its headquarters in Yeoville. Offering high profile services to the Jewish community and performing a successful "outreach" programme, it has attracted about 150 Jewish families to its ranks as hard-core observant members, with its general sphere of influence on the Jewish community being far higher.

the "mother city" of South Africa and its seniority over, and distance (a thousand miles) from, Johannesburg necessitate another governing body. Both of these organisations have a *Bet Din* to regulate matters such as conversion, *kashrut*, issuing bills of divorcement (*get*) and the settling of private disputes. South Africa adopted the British pattern of having a chief rabbi in 1915. (Prior to then, the British chief rabbi was regarded as the head of the South African Jewish community.) The position is a prestigious one, though it does not possess the power of its British counterpart, and the incumbent often determines its importance through his own ability and personal qualities. His seat is at the Great Synagogue (Wolmarans Street) in Johannesburg, while Cape Town has its own chief rabbi. Progressive Judaism's coordinating body is the South African Union for Progressive Judaism, located in Johannesburg.

According to a survey undertaken in 1974,⁵ an overwhelming majority of South African Jews are affiliated with a synagogue or temple. The ratio of Orthodox to Reform affiliation was calculated at about 82% to 18%. This trend is quite contrary to that displayed in the United States, where, in a survey performed at a similar time, it was established that of 82% of American Jewish heads of households who identified with religion, 45% were unaffiliated. Conservatism showed the highest membership of 40.5%, while Reform had a membership of 30% and Orthodoxy 11.4%.⁶ Affiliation with synagogues or temples tends to be predicated on traditional family association rather than on deliberate ideological choice. The social and educational systems in South Africa are not conducive to the promotion of individual thought,⁷ and this spurs attachment to tradition but does not lead to creativity. Although South African Jews are among the most organised communities in the world, creative Jewish thinking has not flourished. Not only is there little awareness of modern Jewish movements such as Reconstructionism, there is little innovative theology and there are no theologians of world stature.

Both groups in South Africa tend to move in the direction of Conservatism. It is not at all uncommon, in the South African context, for Jews affiliated with fully Orthodox synagogues to observe relatively few of the prescribed Jewish religious practices without experiencing feelings of incongruity or dislocation. Likewise, radical Reform Judaism has never taken root in South Africa and congregants display a high level of traditionalism. One of the main reasons for the emergence of this pattern

5. S. Della Pergola, and D. Tal, "Religion and Religious Observance", *South African Jewish Population Study*, Report no. 11, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University Jerusalem, 1978. Although the figures quoted here are not entirely up to date, they give a good indication of prevailing trends.

6. See G.S. Rosenthal, "Jewish Religion in America: A Study in Mutuality", *JUDAISM* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 91.

7. S.E. Aschheim, "The Communal Organization of South African Jewry," *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (Dec. 1970): 218.

seems to be the historic legacy of the community.⁸ The entire white population of South Africa is of immigrant origin, and white settlement in the country is little more than three hundred years old. From the beginning, there were small concentrations of Jewish settlers, but the real foundations of South African Jewish congregational life were established at the Cape during the mid-nineteenth century in a country which was, at that time, a British colony. The religious leadership was predominantly British. Congregational and communal facilities laid down in those years formed nuclei, characterised by Anglo-Jewish patterns, which were built upon subsequently by successive sets of new-comers.

Undoubtedly the most formative influence on the spirit of South African Jewry came from the large influx of East European, particularly Lithuanian, Jews which took place from the 1880s until the Second World War. These Jews were optimistic, courageous, adaptable and imbued with a spirit of piety as well as with a passionate love and longing for Zion. Experiencing persecution and degradation in Eastern Europe, they were drawn to South Africa by the tales of fabulous opportunity which filtered through from the correspondence of those who had already preceded them. There was nothing of the "sweat-shop" image which was engendered by similar correspondence from America at the time. South Africa was second only to North America as a place of destination and the Jewish immigrants from Lithuania were so numerous that South Africa was described as "a colony of Lithuania."⁹

South Africa has never had a "melting-pot" syndrome, so there has been little desire to obliterate distinctive cultural patterns which emerged from Eastern Europe. On the contrary, the policies of the various South African governments served to emphasise, rather than to obliterate, ethnic and cultural differences. This helped to preserve Jewish identity as well as separateness, an undeniable dynamic of Judaism and the Jewish community still shows the marked influence of its East European forebears. In fact, even though most South African Jews were born locally, many have had intimate contact with parents, grand-parents or even great-grand-parents of East European origin, retaining fond memories of their legendary qualities. Thus, modern Judaism in South Africa is the unique product of its "Anglo-Litvak" legacy. The Anglo-Jewish patterns of worship and organisation were overlaid with Lithuanian piety and love of Zion, "a case of pouring Litvak spirit into the Anglo-Jewish bottles."¹⁰

8. An authoritative history of the Jews of South Africa is by G. Saron and L. Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa: A History* (Cape Town, 1955). See also S. Cohen, "The Historical Background," in Arkin pp. 1-22, which gives specific information regarding the political influences acting upon the S.A. Jewish community.

9. Saron and Hotz, p. 61. This phrase is attributed to Nahum Sokolow, famous Zionist leader and historian, who visited South Africa in 1926.

10. This graphic description was coined by Gustav Saron in "The Making of South African Jewry: An Essay in Historical Interpretation," *South African Jewry 1965*, L. Feldberg, ed. (Johannesburg), p. 21.

Orthodoxy in South Africa is far from monolithic, and represents a considerable variety of commitment and observance. Undergirding its varied manifestations is a respect for tradition and a strong support for Israel. Apart from the rabbinate, and the more ultra-Orthodox splinter groups, there is a fair percentage of pious practising Orthodox Jews who observe Judaism assiduously while combining it with a productive secular life. These could, perhaps, be termed "neo-Orthodox" and have stemmed largely from the religious youth movement, the *Bnei Akiva*, which gave rise, ultimately, to the Yeshiva College, the first religious day school in the country. (The previously established and very much larger Jewish day school, the King David School, can be regarded as "national Traditional.") The Yeshiva College also has a vigorous congregation which serves a number of these Jews as well as a significant sector of the Orthodox Jewish population residing in the Northeastern suburbs of Johannesburg. This particular organisation transformed the concept of a "yeshiva" from its closed and exclusive associations to one offering a facility for the entire surrounding area.¹¹ Officially, Orthodoxy is based on Torah Judaism which involves the meticulous observance of Jewish ritual. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Jews who are affiliated with Orthodox synagogues could, in fact, be labelled "the non-observant Orthodox." It is their presence which gives South African Judaism its special character. Were such individuals to emigrate to a country such as America, they would probably find a niche for themselves in a Conservative congregation. A move to Israel could prove to be counter-productive from a religious point of view, since there they would be forced to opt either for a totally religious way of life as a member of an Orthodox congregation, or for a secular life-style with no affiliation at all. This flexibility of South African Orthodoxy, as it is understood by the average congregant, helps, ironically, to preserve Judaism.

Reform Jews in South Africa are often thought of by outside observers as being similar to Conservative Jews in America. Ideologically, this is certainly not the case, since South African Reform Judaism, like Reform anywhere in the world, emphasises the ongoing nature of revelation and rejects the authority of the *halakhah*. However, in practice, it is far more "conservative" than its counterparts elsewhere in the world. The skull cap and prayer shawl are used by men in temple services and, in catering for functions at which there might be attendance by members of the Orthodox laity, there is an avoidance of serving meat and milk produce together, of serving non-kosher meat, or obviously forbidden foods such as shell-fish.

11. The first Jewish day school in South Africa was the King David School. Since its inception, in 1948, several other such schools have emerged, most of them offering national traditional education, others offering education with a much deeper religious basis. The Lubavitch and the Kollel have both established schools to teach children in accordance with their religious ideologies.

Statistical analysis¹² has revealed a high degree of traditionalism in the religious practice of South African Jews. It has been estimated that 59% of Jewish households eat kosher food sometimes, while 27% eat it exclusively. Others are not concerned with dietary regulations. As many as 83.9% observe the Sabbath ritual of lighting candles, 71.4% have a festive meal and 67.6% say the benediction over wine. It is very significant that only 9.2% fully observe the Sabbath, though synagogue attendance on that day has been estimated as being as high as 35.9%. The festivals are marked in some way by the majority of the Jewish population, with Passover showing the highest degree of observance; 94% of the Jewish population maintains at least some aspect of it.

A majority of South African Jews attend synagogue or temple on the High Holy Days of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, most of them travelling there by motor car. *Yom Kippur* appears to be observed by 90% of households, and synagogues, particularly in centres such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, are packed. This high attendance on the High Holy Days has given rise to the description "three-times-a-year Jews," while the impact of the absence of Jews in the general life of the major cities on these three working days is quite remarkable. A description of Bloemfontein in 1877 on the High Festivals could well fit Johannesburg today: "None of our tradesmen of the Jewish persuasion have opened their stores and so caused the town to present a very dull and semi-holiday appearance."¹³ This phenomenon creates an impression of there being a far greater number of Jews in South Africa than is actually the case, and also testifies to the vitality of the contribution of Jews to the workings of the major urban areas.

An interesting index to the traditionalism of South African Jews is the fact that almost all celebrations, of an individual or communal nature, are kosher-catered under the supervision of the *Bet Din*. This was not always the case. Until the mid 1940s there was almost no provision for public kosher catering. With the assumption of office of the former chief rabbi, Dr. Louis I. Rabinowitz, immediate steps were taken to change the situation. From a small beginning in which part of a hotel kitchen would be prepared for a particular wedding or other celebration, now all Orthodox functions must be catered under the supervision of the *Bet Din* if any of the Orthodox religious leaders are to be present. This pattern has become normative for all Orthodox Jews in the largest centres and is observed even by almost totally non-observant Orthodox Jews.

There are several reasons for the low impact of the Reform movement in South Africa, not the least of which is the traditional piety inher-

12. For the statistics concerning religious observance in South Africa, I am indebted to Della Pergola and Tal.

13. *The Friend* (20 September, 1877); cited in Saron and Hotz, pp. 323 ff. Bloemfontein, some 260 miles south-west of Johannesburg, is the judicial capital of South Africa. Whereas it once had a significant number of Jews living in it, there are very few there at present.

ited from the Lithuanian forebears. It is significant that when Progressive Judaism was introduced into South Africa in 1933 it was met initially with "bitter hostility from those who resented the intrusion of an apparently schismatic movement as well as timidity on the part of those who sympathised with the Progressive point of view."¹⁴ It is significant, also, that the founding rabbi of Progressive Judaism in South Africa, Moses Cyrus Weiler (currently living in Israel), is well versed in Talmudic learning and is a descendant of the great Hassidic rabbi, Shneour Zalman of Lyady. As such, he set the moderate course which South African Progressive Judaism was to take, including being deeply pro-Zionist, when the world Reform movement was espousing an anti-Zionist ideology.

One of the reasons for the tremendous inroads made by Reform and Conservative Judaism in the American community at the beginning of the present century was the fact that, very often, the Orthodox rabbi was unable to communicate in English. That problem did not exist in South Africa, as the earliest Orthodox leaders were of British origin.

In addition to the inherent attachment to Lithuanian piety, South African Jews appear to exhibit a resistance to any change which departs radically from established patterns. It has been suggested that the growth of the Reform movement may have been impeded, in part, by the prevailing religious attitudes of the surrounding people, characterised by the Dutch Reform ethic which is seen as "puritan and extremely traditional." Also, there are comparatively low rates of assimilation of South African Jewry and assimilation is a condition classically associated with the rise of the Reform movement.¹⁵ It seems characteristic of South African Jews that a respect for tradition overrides the desire for consistency of affiliation. Although, in the early years of East European settlement, Jews might have been forced to work on the Sabbath as a result of real economic need, they did not expect the synagogue or Judaism to change to suit these needs, but lived with the resultant incongruity.

The large number of non-observant Orthodox Jews in South Africa could also account for the low impact of the Reform movement as well as for the fact that a Conservative movement has never been established in the country. The majority of South African Jews, even when drawn toward a secular life-style, do not feel the need to break away from Orthodoxy in order to ally their affiliations more closely with their actual practices. Needless to say, the position is not one which is encouraged by the Orthodox rabbinate, but, being so intrinsic a part of the South African Jewish way of life, it is accepted in the hope that, ultimately, religious observance will increase.

It is common for Orthodoxy to be challenged with the assertion that the only difference between it and Reform is that Reform Jews are not

14. Cited from the Hon. Lily H. Montagu in a press report: "Rabbi Weiler to Resign in December," *The Jewish Herald* (1 February, 1957).

15. See Aschheim, *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

"hypocrites". The rabbinate's reply is that in Orthodox Judaism, which holds firm to the validity of the Oral Torah, there is at least an ideal which, it claims, is conspicuously absent from Reform observance requirements that place no emphasis on the Oral Torah. It is clear that, in the South African context, Orthodoxy is, for the most part, a widely accepted form of identification rather than a system of disciplined observance.¹⁶

Relations between the leaders of Orthodoxy and Reform Judaism are strained, particularly in Johannesburg where there is such a wide spectrum of observance. Other areas exhibit a greater degree of tolerance, which may be relative to the degree of commitment and observance. The laity tends to overlook ideological differences in order to promote harmony, but Orthodox leaders see the Reform movement as a total departure from authentic Torah Judaism and, therefore, as a threat. Reform leaders, on the other hand, insist that they promote a valid form of Judaism and desire the concomitant religious recognition. It is highly significant, in the broad South African context, that when a raging dispute erupted in 1963, Orthodox leadership perceived a distinct difference between the "casual non-observant Jew" and a believer in the Reform movement. The latter was seen as a heretic and apostate from the whole Torah, standing outside of the religious community of Israel.¹⁷ Nevertheless, no responsible Orthodox leader would ever deny the essential Jewishness of anyone born to a Jewish mother, no matter what his or her affiliation. At this stage, Orthodox leaders tend to "ignore" the Reform movement, an attitude that is probably made possible by the smallness of the Reform movement and, possibly, by the smallness of the Jewish community generally.

The picture of South African Jewry is one of an identifying, industrious community whose attachment to Zion and concern with matters of Jewish interest are reflected in its lively Jewish press.¹⁸ Matters of a wider nature, however, regarding the political situation, are not usually reflected there but in the general press.

There is no official collective "Jewish" policy with regard to the political system of apartheid. However, racial discrimination, which is entrenched in that system, has repeatedly been condemned by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, which is the official representative body of the Jewish community. The South African Union of Jewish Students constantly expresses outrage at the principles of, and problems

16. *Ibid.*, p. 218 ff.

17. Press report: "Members of Reform are not Jews' says Orthodox Organ," *S.A. Jewish Times* (5 July, 1963). Despite the fact that the press tends to sensationalise incidents of this nature, the animosity between Orthodox and Reform leaders, particularly in Johannesburg, is reasonably well reflected in this sort of statement.

18. There are three Jewish weeklies: *The Zionist Record*, *The South African Jewish Times* and *The Jewish Herald*.

engendered by, apartheid, and both bodies have expressed their condemnation of some of the more oppressive actions, such as the expulsion of blacks from squatter camps.

Support of, or opposition to, government racial policy is a matter of individual rather than communal concern and it expressly is not part of the Board of Deputies' function to advise Jews how they should vote, or to take any stand in party politics. However, in March 1985, at its thirty-third Congress, the Board of Deputies did issue a resolution rejecting apartheid. Although the Congress noted its support of, and appreciation for, steps already taken in the process of peaceful reform, it expressed its dismay at the current violence in the country and called upon all concerned to do everything possible to ensure the establishment of a climate of peace and calm in which dialogue, negotiation and processes of reform could be continued. The resolution supports and commits itself to justice, equal opportunity and removal of all provisions in the laws of South Africa which discriminate on grounds of colour and race.

This resolution was motivated by the ethical imperative of Judaism and several rabbis were vociferous in their support of its adoption. Nevertheless, the formulating body was a "secular," rather than a religious, organisation. Until very recently, very few rabbis made statements on the issue of apartheid from the pulpit. A few, both Orthodox and Reform, denounced the system, but this was by no means the norm. By and large, from an official religious perspective, until the recent escalating unrest and violence, local human rights issues did not occupy the centre of the Jewish religious platform.

This might lead one to suspect that South African Jews are overly concerned with their own problems. To the extent that this is so, the concern arises in relation to Jewish education and the quality and preservation of Jewish life, and not in relation to anti-Semitism. South African Jews can be considered among the most fortunate diaspora communities in the world. Anti-Semitism is problematic on the individual level but certainly not on any official level. The government prohibits any overt public displays of it and any publicly stated anti-Semitism derives either from the ultra-right or the ultra-left wing. While some of the political parties to the right of the government¹⁹ resort to sporadic anti-Semitic propa-

19. These are the HNP (*Herstigte Nasionale Party* — The "Reconstituted" or "Purged" National Party) and the CP (Conservative Party). The HNP's official organ, *Die Afrikaner*, a regular weekly, "simply teems with openly anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist and pro-Nazi articles," said Mervyn Smith in an address entitled *The Extent of the Anti-Semitic Threat in South Africa Today*, delivered at the 32nd National Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, May 1983. He points out that rightwing anti-Semitism in South Africa exists, by and large, only in the printed word and that anti-Semitism is not a central plank in the policies of the CP and HNP. It seems that their anti-Semitic statements should be seen in the context of a wider policy of racial intolerance.

The AWB (*Afrikanerweerstandsbeweging* — Afrikaans Resistance Movement) is a barely-veiled neo-Nazi party whose anti-Semitism is more central to its ideology.

ganda, it is not central to their policies. Were any of them to come to power, it would be difficult to predict its attitude to Jews, but, at present, the chief concern is white supremacy, untrammelled by any concessions or change. In fact, the denunciations of the government's reforms are probably acting as a significant brake on the pace of reform.

As Harry Schwarz, member of parliament for the Progressive Federal Party has pointed out, the Jew in South Africa lives in a complex society — “often feeling he is about to be caught in a pincer between right-wing white reaction and radical left-wing extremism.”²⁰ Conscious of the danger of becoming a scapegoat if things become tough, he appreciates the legal equality which he enjoys. Yet, he is distinctly uncomfortable about the fact that others do not share the same privilege. With the present political climate in South Africa, it is more difficult than ever to gauge the position of individual Jews, and, as Schwarz predicted, there is probably, at this time, a greater political fluidity in Jewish political attitudes than was hitherto apparent, with some changes of allegiance.

South Africa's Jews are predominantly locally born. There is a sprinkling of British and American Jews as well as a fairly large, but indeterminate, number of Israelis. There is a strong influence of American, as well as British and Israeli rabbis. Only recently have there been facilities for the local training of Orthodox rabbis, but there are none for the training of Reform rabbis. Much of the religious revival in recent years can be attributed to the American influence. This is certainly the case with the Lubavitch. It could be reasoned that a great deal (but certainly not all) of the recent ultra-Orthodox fervour is an American import and that, in essence, South African Jews are a conservative and extremely traditional group.

On the one hand, South African Jewry seems to be a polarised community, with the poles being represented by a marked revival of Jewish awareness and by a movement toward secularisation. On the other hand, it is highly conservative and traditional. The pole represented by the move toward secularisation is shared by Judaism the world over as it faces modernity. However, the unique blend of characteristics which have moulded the religious renaissance, the large body of non-observant Orthodox as well as the relatively small number of moderate Reform Jews, will, no doubt, continue to operate, thus helping to preserve the identity and survival of a lively, productive and strangely aware group of diaspora Jews.

20. Arkin, *Op. cit.* p. 144. See H. Schwarz, “Political Attitudes and Inter-Action,” in Arkin, *Op. cit.*, pp. 131-145 for an analysis of the political involvement of Jews in South Africa up to 1984. Significant changes, in terms of governmental policies and black and white reaction to them, have taken place in the country in the last year and the entire South African community, both Jewish and non-Jewish, has become much more politically concerned and aware.

Sermons To Be Read In Context

Review-Essay by PHILLIP J. SIGAL

John Chrysostom and the Jews. By ROBERT WILKEN. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London. University of California Press, 1983. xvii + 190 pp.

THE BOOK BEFORE US IS LUCID AND WELL-written. It contains an excellent chapter on Judaism in Antioch during the early rabbinic centuries, sets forth in useful fashion contemporary Christianity there, and provides interesting insight into the interplay of Graeco-Roman culture, Christianity and Judaism in the early centuries of the common era. The author presents us with an excellent source for understanding the historic conundrum of Judaic-Christian relations.

This is not to say that there are not occasional lapses in Wilken's coverage of Judaism. Thus, for instance, he refers (p. 43) to the shifting of religious life to Galilee after the Bar Kokhba rebellion but omits discussion of the previous six flourishing decades of renewal at Yabneh. He generally provides adequate documentation although, at times, the material calls for more extensive footnotes. His table of abbreviations is useful, even if untraditional in format, and his extensive bibliography and indexes of modern authors and subjects round out a fine work.

Wilken has concentrated on a series of eight sermons delivered by John Chrysostom, a priest in Antioch (only later to become Bishop of Constantinople) during 386-387. These sermons (homilies) were titled *Adversus Judaeos* ("Against the Jews") by a medieval Latin editor, but they are recently more correctly referred to as "Discourses Against Judaizing Christians." For, in reality, although Chrysostom does not spare the Jews in his sermons, his real target is Christians who were attracted to the synagogue of Antioch and to the observance of Judaic religious ritual and holy days. One of the strong motivations for patristic anti-Judaism was the Jewish threat to Christian identity, the attraction of Judaism for Christians, the competition offered by Jews for the souls of the pagans, and the constant challenge that Judaism presented to Christian legitimacy. Thus, for example, in Chrysostom's Antioch where a flourishing Jewish monotheism existed, there also prevailed a powerful anti-trinitarian Arian movement whose position was directly, or indirectly, reinforced by the very visible Judaism. It was, furthermore, a small step for Christians from the custom of venerating the tomb of Maccabean martyrs in Antioch and seeking cures from those dead Jewish saints, to visiting living rabbis for the same cures and then participating in the synagogue rites.

Judaizing had been widespread from the beginning of Christianity.

The late PHILLIP SIGAL was an expert on the relations of Judaism and early Christianity.

The term signified efforts to establish Judaic rites among Christians, usually related to the holy days and food practices. Paul already calls attention to this intra-church controversy in Colossians 2:16, and what was not acceptable to him in the first century was equally abhorrent to Chrysostom in the fourth. While Paul is, at times, quite ambiguous, John expresses the problem explicitly, drawing an absolute dichotomy which has made any kind of interchange or ecumenical dialogue impossible until modern times. He insists to his congregation that, "If the Jewish ceremonies are venerable and great ours are lies" (Discourses I, 6:5).

It is not always clear whether Jews evangelized in Antioch or were passive toward their Christian and pagan neighbors. At one point John seems to imply that Jews waited passively in their homes and that the Christians went seeking them out (Discourse III, 6:10), but, at another juncture, he seems to denounce the Jews as evangelical, calling them "wolves raiding the sheep" (Discourse IV, 1:1). He did not share the general Judaic perception that a great segment of Judaism was equally obligatory outside the holy land as in the land. His theology teaches that the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem was punishment of the Jews for the crucifixion, and that, with the destruction, God intended the termination of the entire structure of Judaic religious rite (Discourse IV, 6:9). He concludes that "to go to the synagogue is a greater crime than going to the theater" (Ibid. 7:3) for it countermands the explicit design of God.

Although Chrysostom begins his homilies against "Judaizers," Christians of his own church who were pursuing a syncretistic pattern, he escalates his polemic from a severe critique of Judaism to a direct attack upon Jews, arguing that they are gluttons and drunkards, more savage than highwaymen. Their synagogues are brothels, theaters, den of robbers and demons and places of sorcery and witchcraft. This latter attack is his way of trying to dissuade his people from going there for cures. He urges them to accept disease and pain as God's punishment for sins, and warns them that pursuing healing from the Jews will only bring a greater measure of God's wrath upon them.

John Chrysostom's sermons were preached during the high holy days and Passover seasons. The latter was an especially threatening time, for many Christians sought to observe Passover and to coincide their Easter commemoration with it. John accuses the synagogues of being centers of lewdness, unchastity and sexual immorality at these seasons. Such charges would be read by a modern Jew as gross anti-Jewishness unrelated to fact, based entirely upon zealous and causeless hatred. But, as in many other instances where Christian polemic is based upon internal Jewish sources and not merely fabricated out of thin air, in this case it is based on actual experience in Antioch. The Talmud actually states that the worst time of the year for such hedonistic or sensual temptation was the *rigla*?, the festival season (b. *Kid.* 81a). Tosafot to the text informs us

that because of this real phenomenon of immorality at those seasons Jews often fasted after Pesah and Sukkot when male-female gatherings were common, lest they had inadvertently sinned by touch or even thought.

In dealing with John Chrysostom's homilies, Wilken is objective, enlightening and, most important, he aptly reminds us of the conditions that shaped John's thought. John was a contemporary of Emperor Julian who constituted a grave threat to Christian supremacy just after the middle of the fourth century when John was a young boy. Pagan hellenism was still the dominant culture in Antioch. Although imperial statute regulated the observance of Sunday as a general day of rest, pagan festivals such as the New Year, known as Kalends, were still celebrated by Christian Antiochenes, the educational system was pagan, the rate of mixed marriage between Christians and pagans was very high, and children were named after their pagan ancestors. So threatening were cultural conditions that John had already earlier expressed the notion that one could not be a Christian and live in Antioch. Furthermore, he was doing battle with Christian Arians as much as with Jews. It is hardly surprising that he would react with as great wrath against Judaizers as against Arians and pagans and, consequently, against the Jews who were the inspiration for the Judaizers.

There existed a strong undercurrent of anti-Judaic attitudes since earlier hellenistic times, and John appealed to this feeling in order to render his church more secure. Intellectuals in the Graeco-Roman world resented Jews for their separatist observances such as the Sabbath and dietary practices and their refusal to marry with gentiles. They saw this type of religious behavior as aloofness and even xenophobia and, consequently, Jews were increasingly alienated from their neighbors. Almost four centuries before John, the Egyptian writer Manetho had ascribed pejorative origins to Israel, terming them lepers expelled from Egypt. Yet, Judaism had had a relative degree of success, and it was this very success, manifest in Antioch during the fourth century of the present era, that provoked John to his severe critique.

Tacitus had already called the Jews a "criminal people," and from the time of the Emperor Constantine Judaism was termed a "nefarious sect" in imperial legislation. The laws of Constantine and his successors were ultimately codified in the Theodosian Code, which sought to contain Judaism by discouraging pagans or Christians from becoming Jews, protecting Jews who became Christians from the vindictiveness of their fellow-Jews, and by reducing the affiliation of non-Jews with Judaism. They prohibited the use of coercion to force a slave to become Jewish; they proscribed Christian marriage with Jews lest the Christian partner convert. But throughout the fourth century Roman legislation continued to protect the free exercise of Judaism, and the legislation to contain it appears to have been ignored. Furthermore, Judaic interchange with pagan scholars continued freely, as is evident from the still-extant letters

of the celebrated teacher of John Chrysostom, the rhetor Libanius, who corresponded with Rabbi Gamaliel VI. What provoked John was the threat of an acculturated attractive religion that was supposed to have died in the year 70 and whose death, by John's theological calculations, was confirmed in the Bar Kokhba debacle.

As early as the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr reflects how widespread is Christian observance of Jewish practices when he liberally concedes that such people are good Christians just so long as they do not evangelize others to live a Jewish life. Irenaeus, at the end of the second century, and the pagan Celsus against whom Origen took up his pen in the third century, also attest to Christians within the church observing Judaic ritual. Throughout the fourth century, church councils passed laws to prevent Judaizing in such harmless matters as eating mazah during Passover or entering synagogues for worship. In his commentary to Zekhariah, St. Jerome informs us how serious is the problem when he tells us that the Judaizers expect that it will not be long until Jews will no longer become Christians but Christians will become Jews.

It is with this in mind that we must understand John Chrysostom. His sermons tell us that Christians worshipped in the synagogue on the Sabbath and high holy days, made a point of going to hear *shofar*, fasted on Yom Kippur, participated in building *sukkot*, and practiced circumcision and ritual immersion. John is irritated by the reality that the Christian Old Testament is Jewish, that the very fountainhead of the Christian faith is in a text controlled by Jews, and that Jewish teachers and texts are the only way in which Christians could get to the original documents of their faith, even in the case of a learned biblicist like St. Jerome. It is no wonder, therefore, that he says, "This is the reason I hate the Jews, because they have the Torah and the prophets . . ."

But there was another element of Jewish power that provoked John. This was Jewish magic. Jews today are prone to dismiss this as an anti-Semitic attack, but the fact remains that Christians and pagans believed that Jews possessed magical power and went to them for healing. Magical papyri show the use of numerous biblical texts for spells and of formulas designed for every type of event or experience, from healing sickness to successfully courting a woman. Though modern doctors have ceased to make house-calls, it appears that Jewish sorcerers did make such calls in fourth-century Antioch. Since success at magic implied religious power, Chrysostom preached that Jewish magic was the work of Satan.

A very interesting segment of Wilken's book is the chapter entitled "Fourth-Century Preaching and the Rhetoric of Abuse." Here we see how John Chrysostom's use of invective, stereotypical phrases, hyperbole, exaggeration, sensationalism, metaphors and similes that evoked concrete images are of the rhetor's style, which entered Christian preaching. Wilken reminds us that "Christians expected a performance in church equal to what they enjoyed in the theater. If dissatisfied, they booed and hissed; if delighted, they clapped their hands and shouted." Not what

John said mattered, but how he said it. His parishioners continued to frequent the synagogue, to seek out Jewish healing and to enjoy the delights of Jewish festivals. His violent sermons, full of innuendo and inflammatory denunciation, his references to Judaism as a disease, to the condition of Jews as drunkenness, brought crowds to the church and earned him much applause as a superior rhetor, but in no case did they incite Christians to violence against Jews in Antioch. Though he called the synagogues dens of immorality, brothels and dwelling places of demons, his parishioners continued to frequent them for worship and healing.

John is among the first to refer to contemporary Jews, as distinct from the Jews involved in the crucifixion of Jesus, as “Christ-killers.” Although this charge led to agonizing Christian brutality in later centuries, it did not inspire Antiochenes to attack their neighbors. In real life, divorced from his rhetoric, John even praised Jews, attributing to them a special relationship with God, and publicly expressing his gratitude for helping him preserve his position as patriarch of Constantinople.

Nevertheless, as Wilken aptly indicates in his Epilogue, Chrysostom’s writings, including the venomous sermons, had a strong impact upon later Christian generations. They were used in Byzantine liturgy and might have had some effect upon the special Russian technique of the pogrom. But John was conducting only a rhetorical battle. In later medieval and early modern centuries, those who put his sermons to destructive use were applying physical power against a powerless community. It is no more appropriate to blame him for what was done to some medieval Jewish communities than to blame Moses when certain Israeli zealots call the Palestinians Amalek and threaten to expel all Arabs from Israel on the basis of the Torah as blueprint. The distortion of ancient literature by latter-day enthusiasts should not mark that literature for condemnation. It should be read within the context of its own time and judged for its impact in its own environment. In their time, and in their environment, John’s sermons did Jews no harm.

When we read the sermons today we should see in them serious theological challenges. As Wilken correctly summarizes, “John’s homilies are part of a Christian interpretation of Judaism that must be subjected to theological criticism.” What, for instance, is a reasoned response of Judaic theologians to the proposition that the rise of Christianity and the almost immediate subsequent destruction of Jerusalem signalled the delegitimization of Judaism? John did not appreciate the rabbinic revolution, nor did he understand the obverse of Gamaliel’s famous line — if Christianity survives it will be a sign that the Christian faith-experience is the work of God (Acts 5:38-39) — then so, too, is the perseverance of Judaism a sign of God’s work. A reading of John’s sermons should not provoke recrimination or stimulate drawing a connecting line between the homilies and Auschwitz. It should, rather, evoke determination for serious theological discourse and interchange to discover a means for allowing mutual theological space for Judaism and Christianity in a dual-covenant formula.

Morning

JUDAH GOLDIN

Bind me with straps
With leather bands
Like zebra stripes, seven times
Around my left arm bordering
My mostly fickle heart,
My middle finger thrice, my hand,
And like a wreath around my head
Fix the seen phylactery.

And I will recite, I shall betroth
And then again, I shall betroth
And still once more, I shall betroth.
Three times in all perpetuate
The bond, the knowledge-love that He
Demands of me to cultivate
From thirteen on perennially.

You never can tell, it really may
If I will do it day by day
(except for Sabbath and holiday).
It's only pious contraband
Not submission to command
If I do it when I please,
Like favored anniversaries
That come, that go, that get mislaid
Then are forgotten or betrayed.

The magic works whenever I
Obey by rote and don't ask why.
How else in an age when all is fashion
Preserve at least one act with passion?

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Like A Jewel In A Setting

The Five Scrolls. Edited by ALBERT H. FRIEDLANDER and HERBERT BROWNSTEIN. New York. CCAR Press, 1984. 383 pp., \$15.00.

Reviewed by ADELE BERLIN

THE FIRST sentence of the introduction tells us that *The Five Scrolls* is "intended as a contribution to the process of the religious renewal of American Jewry." Let me say at the outset of this review that the goal is laudable and, if used as hoped by the editors, the book will certainly help to achieve it. It is designed to make the five *megillot* and, thereby, the festivals with which they are associated, more accessible and more meaningful to Reform Jewry.

Unlike many ancient societies in which literature was communicated orally, ours is a visual, literate culture where books are not meant to be heard, but read. It follows, then, that if a book is to be meaningful, it must appeal to us on a visual level. Biblical books, of course, were, and still are, read aloud in liturgical contexts and studied from written texts, but few of these were designed to appeal to the eye. The traditional exceptions are the Haggadah and the Scroll of Esther which have long been illuminated and decorated in various ways. I would like to think of *The Five Scrolls* as a continuation and broadening of this tradition. This is a beautiful book — its Hebrew and English print is clear and pleasing, and it is liberally illustrated with the drawings of Leonard Baskin. It is, thus, a combination of ancient literature and modern art. But this is no coffee-table display piece (although it is also issued in a huge, coffee-table size); it is meant to be used for religious purposes. The

book is, as the editors suggest, "an act of *hidur mitzvah*."

Such a volume should not be judged by academic criteria alone, but by how well it is likely to succeed in its purpose. Therefore I will review it from both esthetic and scholarly points of view.

The arrangement of the Scrolls — Ecclesiastes, Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations — does not follow the order in the Hebrew Bible, but the order in which they are read, beginning with the month of Tishre, the beginning of the Jewish year. Public reading of the Scrolls takes place on Succot, Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, and the Ninth of Av. (The order in the Hebrew Bible also follows the calendar, but begins with Nisan, reflecting a time when the year began in Nisan. The order of the Scrolls in Christian Bibles is altogether different; they are not grouped together for they are not read publicly in the Christian liturgy.)

The Hebrew text and English translation are on facing pages. In general, the amount of Hebrew text corresponds to the amount of English, but not always. For instance, on p. 24, the Hebrew goes to the middle of verse 25 while the accompanying English reaches only partially through verse 24. At other times, the amount of Hebrew and English text is the same but one or another takes up less room, leaving empty space on one side. These situations may be unavoidable, but they produce either an unbalanced look or make it more difficult for the reader to match the translation with the original. The situation is somewhat improved in the poetic sections, where both English and Hebrew texts (contrary to Masoretic Bibles) are printed in poetic lines. Where the traditional scribal practice is to arrange words in a special manner, as in the listing of the ten sons of

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Haman, this is done in the Hebrew. In the English, however, the names are not set out one by one but are printed in a block along with the rest of the prose. There are other mixtures of Masoretic and innovative practices: the Hebrew text adheres to the Masoretic tradition of making certain letters bigger or smaller than normal, but in the alphabetic acrostics in Lamentations the first letter of each verse is printed in bold type (in both Hebrew and English) to make this device obvious. That is an innovation. (The JPS edition of *The Five Megilloth and Jonah*, published in 1969, prints the Hebrew text in the traditional way and puts the Hebrew letter of the alphabet in the margin.) More disturbing is the treatment of the *Qere* - *Ketiv*. The text indicates both, but in its main body it *writes* and vocalizes the form to be *read* (*Qere*), and notes at the bottom of the page the unvocalized written form (*Ketiv*). It has thus reversed the normal procedure of *writing* the *written* form and indicating elsewhere the way it is to be pronounced in the reading.

The translation is not a newly commissioned one, nor is it the most up-to-date scholarly rendering. In fact, the editors have eschewed the latter in favor of a modernized version of the 1851 (London) translation of the *Jewish School and Family Bible*, which they find to be "a Victorian text of some elegance" and one that may "unite us with parents and grandparents who might have muttered that 'all is vanity' ", and who "made that English text part of their daily conversation." Now I seriously question how many of our parents and grandparents fit that category. I suspect that there was pure nostalgia on the part of the editors for a translation that was meaningful to *them*, or, perhaps, they were searching for a Jewish equivalent of the King James Version, a translation

that remains popular today, despite its outmoded language, because of the sheer beauty of its cadences. As far as I know, Reform Judaism does not have an Authorized English translation and, so, if the goal was to make the Bible accessible to modern readers, it would have been better to do so through a modern translation like the new JPS — a rendering of no small literary merit which is fast becoming accepted throughout the American Jewish community. An isolated phrase like "vanity of vanities" (in the CCAR) might still be preferable to "utter futility" of the new JPS; but to say that Elimelech "went to sojourn in the field of Moab" instead of "went to reside in the country of Moab" is to promote neither elegance nor clarity. And this kind of pseudo-Victorianism occurs often: we read of "vessels" instead of "jars" (Ruth 2:9), "put on your cloak" for new JPS "dress up" (Ruth 3:3). Now, to be sure, no great harm is caused by such usages, but when we find "corn" in the Book of Ruth instead of "grain," there is a real danger of misperception. In England, "corn" is (American) "grain"; but, to an American, "corn" is something eaten on the cob and is definitely not what Ruth was gleaned during the barley and wheat harvests.

When it comes to the poetry, there is something to be said in favor of the rendering adopted by the CCAR. The acrostics in Lamentations are acrostics in English as well as in Hebrew, without sacrificing much beauty or sense. And sometimes the rhythm seems better in the CCAR edition. But an occasional literal-mindedness makes the poetic metaphor more difficult to grasp, as in Song of Songs 4:16, which, in the CCAR is

Blow upon my garden, that its
spices may flow out.

Let my beloved come into his
garden,
And eat its delicious fruit.

This is better in the new JPS:

Blow upon my garden,
That its perfume may spread.
Let my beloved come to his
garden

And enjoy its luscious fruits!

These examples all involve choices of English words and syntax; the issue here is not one of interpretation, like, for example, whether *hazamir* in Song of Songs 2:12 means "pruning" or "singing," or whether *wayirdenah* in Lamentations 1:13 is from the root *yrd*, "to descend" or *rdh*, "to prevail" (CCAR chooses the second in both cases, against most modern scholarly opinion). I am not very happy with "king of Jerusalem" in Ecclesiastes 1:1 for "king in Jerusalem."

For many reasons, then, this edition is not to be viewed as a scholarly one. It does not present a reliable Masoretic text nor does it offer

the latest in biblical exegesis; neither is it quite a traditional edition. For instance, the traditional repetition of the penultimate verse in Lamentations, so as not to end the reading on a negative note, is not indicated. But this book may serve as an inviting entree for those unfamiliar with the Scrolls. Further to enhance their reading, each is provided with a short introduction and a brief liturgy, often containing excerpts, to be recited before the reading. Each biblical book is thus, in the words of the editors, "placed like a jewel in a setting." A fuller liturgy for the festivals appears at the end of the volume.

Although I have some reservations about the book, any attempt to show the Bible as the jewel that it is, is a worthy endeavor. I hope that those who prepared the book will be successful in this attempt, and that those who use it will be stimulated to deepen their religious commitment and their study of the Bible.

A New Light on the Zohar

Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment. Translation and Introduction by DANIEL CHANAN MATT. Preface by Arthur Green. New York-Ramsey-Toronto. Paulist Press, 320 pp.

Reviewed by RAPHAEL PATAI

THE ZOHAR ("Splendor"), the most important book of the Kabbalah, has been available in English since the 1930s in a serviceable five-volume translation by Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1931-34), which contains most of the original text. Dr. Matt's volume contains ca. 2

per cent of the Zohar in a rather free, poetic rendition whose apparent purpose is to whet the appetite of the general reader by presenting him/her with as attractive a selection as possible. To achieve this purpose, the translator-editor puts the excerpts typographically in poem form, and takes certain liberties with the original. Thus, e.g., the beginning of the first selection from the Zohar on Genesis reads in the Sperling-Simon translation:

At the outset the decision of the King made a tracing in the supernal effulgence, a lamp of scintillation, and there issued within the impenetrable recesses of the mysterious limitless a shapeless nucleus enclosed in a ring, neither white nor black nor red nor green nor of any color at

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all. When he took measurements, he fashioned colours to show within, and within the lamp there issued a certain effluence from which colours were imprinted below. The most mysterious Power enshrouded in the limitless clave, as it were, without cleaving its void, remaining wholly unknowable until from the force of the strokes there shone forth a supernal and mysterious point.

In Matt's rendering, this becomes:

When the King conceived
ordaining
He engraved engravings in the
luster on high.
A blinding spark flashed
within the Concealed of the
Concealed
from the mystery of the
Infinite,
a cluster of vapor in
formlessness,
set in a ring,
not white, not black, not red,
not green,
no color at all.
When a band spanned, it
yielded radiant colors.
Deep within the spark gushed
a flow
imbuing colors below,
concealed within the
concealed of the mystery of
the Infinite.
The flow broke through and
did not break through its
aura.
It was not known at all
until, under the impact of
breaking through,
one high and hidden point
shone.

As a comparison of the two excerpts shows, Matt's rendering is not so much a translation as a kind of "poetified" summary of the Zoharic text. However, in general, his excerpts are well chosen, they do afford a glimpse of the major Zoharic themes, and present repre-

sentative samples of the Zohar's fascinating approach to the biblical stories.

I have two minor strictures. In rendering biblical passages which appear as quotations in the Zohar, Matt spells God's name as YHVH. This is obviously at variance with the way the author of the Zohar read the divine name, let alone spelled it in writing. The standard editions have YY, and de Leon, who wrote the Zohar, certainly pronounced it Adonai.

I also have difficulty in understanding why Matt consistently mistranslates the ubiquitous Hebrew designation of God, *haQadosh Barukh Hu*, and its Aramaic equivalent, *Qudsha B'rikh Hu*, which mean "The Holy One, blessed be He." Instead, Matt translates "The Blessed Holy One," which in Hebrew would be *haQadosh haM'vorakh*, a form appearing nowhere in the sources.

These small matters notwithstanding, I enjoyed especially Matt's introduction which, relying heavily on Scholem and Tishby, is a fine survey of such important issues as the intention of R. Moses de Leon in writing the Zohar, its acceptance by the Kabbalists as the work of R. Shim'on ben Yohai, the opposition that it provoked on the part of radical rationalists, the devices that the author employed to establish its authenticity, the imagery and symbolism with which it is replete, the concept of the *Sefirot*, etc. Since, in my book, *The Hebrew Goddess*, I made a special point of emphasizing the mythological, as against mystical, nature of much that is contained in the Zohar, I was gratified to see that, in his introduction, Matt repeatedly stresses the presence of mythical elements, mythical traditions, mythological style, mythical romance, and mythological character in the Zoharic presentation of ideas.

BOOKS RECEIVED

July through September 1985

Listing of a book does not preclude its being reviewed in a subsequent issue of JUDAISM

American-Jewish Life

Greenberg, Blu. *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985. 525 pp., \$10.95 (paper).

Greene, Gloria Kanfer. *The Jewish Holiday Cookbook*. New York: Times Books, 1985. xiv + 399 pp., \$19.95.

Rothchild, Sylvia. *A Special Legacy*. An Oral History of Soviet Jewish Emigres in the United States. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985. 336 pp., \$17.95.

Weisser, Michael R. *A Brotherhood of Memory*. Jewish Landsmanschaften in the New World. New York: Basic Books, 1985. 303 pp., \$18.95.

Autobiography and Biography

Awret, Irene. *Days of Honey*. The Tunisian Boyhood of Rafael Uzan. New York: Schocken Books, 1985. viii + 242 pp., \$18.95.

Franklin, Myrtle and Michael Bor. *Sir Moses Montefiore, 1784-1885*. New York: The Vanguard Press, 1985. 129 pp., \$24.50.

Jungk, Peter Stephan. *Shabbat*. A Rite of Passage in Jerusalem. New York: Times Books, 1985. vi + 151 pp., \$12.95.

Bible

Eichhorn, David Max. *Cain*. Son of the Serpent. Chappaqua, N.Y.: Rossel Books, 1985. 160 pp., \$8.95 (paper).

Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985. xiv + 580 pp., \$57.50.

Buddhism and Islam

Fernando, Antony and Leonard Swidler. *Buddhism Made Plain*. An Introduction for Christians and Jews. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985. xix + 138 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

Ismael, Taroq Y. and Jacqueline S. Ismael. *Government and Politics in Islam*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. viii + 177 pp., \$27.50.

Ethics

Needleman, Jacob. *The Way of the Physician*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. xiv + 187 pp., \$15.95.

Spero, Shubert. *Morality, Halakha and the Jewish Tradition*. New York: KTAV, 1983. xv + 381 pp.

European Jewry

Krinsky, Carol Herselle. *Synagogues of Europe*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985. 457 pp., \$50.00.

Malino, Frances and Bernard Wasserstein, eds. *The Jews in Modern France*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1985. xii + 354 pp., \$30.00.

Falashas

Kessler, David. *The Falashas*. The Forgotten Jews of Ethiopia. New York: Schocken Books, 1985. xiv + 182 pp., \$7.95 (paper).

Feminism

Phillips, John A. *Eve. The History of an Idea*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. xiv + 201 pp., \$7.95 (paper).

Schneider, Susan Weidman. *Jewish and Female*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985. 650 pp., \$12.95 (paper).

Festschriften and Yearbooks

Central Conference of American Rabbis. *Yearbook. Volume XCIV*. New York: CCAR, 1985. 433 pp.

Film

Ehrlich, Evelyn. *Cinema of Paradox*. French Filmmaking Under the German Occupation. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. xiv + 235 pp., \$25.00.

Fiction

Dorlator, Serge. *The Zone*. A Prison Camp Guard's Story. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985. 178 pp., \$14.95.

Fast, Howard. *The Outsider*. New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1985. 311 pp., \$3.95 (paper).

Neugeboren, Jay. *Before My Life Began*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985. 391 pp., \$18.95.

Hasidism

Steinsaltz, Adin. *Beggars and Prayers*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985. xxxiii + 186 pp., \$6.95 (paper).

History

Ben-Sasson, H.H., ed. *A History of the Jewish People*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985. xii + 232 pp., \$18.95 (paper).

Sachar, Abram W. *The Redemption of the Unwanted*. From the Liberation of the Death Camps to the Founding of Israel. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. xxviii + 334 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

Twersky, Isadore, ed. *Danzig, Between East and West. Aspects of Modern Jewish History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985. xviii + 172 pp., \$21.00.

Holocaust

Boas, Jacob. *Boulevard des Misères*. The Story of Transit Camp Westerbork. Hamden, Ct.: Anchor Books, 1985. xi + 169 pp., \$22.50.
Katzburg, Nathaniel, ed. *Pedut*. Rescue in the Holocaust (Hebrew). Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan Univ. Press, 1985. viii + 240 pp.
Kirschner, Robert. *Rabbinic Responsa of the Holocaust Era*. New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1985. xii + 192 pp., \$17.95.
Laub, Morris. *Last Barrier to Freedom*. Internment of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Cyprus, 1946-1949. Berkeley, Cal.: The Judah Magnes Museum, 1985. x + 128 pp., \$8.95 (paper).
Lookstein, Haskel. *Were We Our Brothers' Keepers?* New York: Hartmore House, 1985. 287 pp., \$18.95.

Israel

Baedeker, Karl. *Baedeker's Palestine*. New York: Hippocrene Books Inc., 1985. 174 pp., \$19.95.
Cohen, Richard I., ed. *Vision and Conflict in the Holy Land*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 311 pp., \$29.95.
Gilead, Zerubavel and Dorothea Krock. *Gideon's Spring*. A Man and His Kibbutz. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1985. xv + 333 pp., \$19.95.
Jaffe, Eliezer D. *Givers and Spenders*. The Politics of Charity in Israel. Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1985. 114 pp., \$7.00 (paper).

Jewish Civilization

Brauner, Ronald A. *Jewish Civilization: Essays and Studies*. Philadelphia: Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Press, 1985. 342 pp., \$16.95.

Juvenile

Pomerantz, Barbara. *Who Will Lead Kiddush?* New York: UAHC, 1985. \$6.00 (paper).
Roseman, Kenneth. *Escape From the Holocaust*. New York: UAHC, 1985. 179 pp., \$6.95 (paper).
Segal, Sheila. *Joshua's Dream*. New York: UAHC, 1985. \$6.95.

Literary Criticism

Aarons, Victoria. *Author as Character in the Works of Sholom Aleichem*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985. 176 pp.
Miller, David Neal. *Fear of Fiction*. Narrative Strategies in the Works of Isaac Bashevis Singer. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1985. x + 173 pp., \$29.50.

- Singer, Isaac Bashevis & Richard Burgin. *Conversations With Isaac Bashevis Singer*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1985. x + 179 pp., \$15.95.
- Walden, Daniel, ed. *The World of Chaim Potok*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1985. 123 pp., \$12.95.

Philosophy

- Buber, Martin. *Between Man and Man*. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1985. xxi + 229 pp., \$16.95 (paper).
- Mendes-Flohr, ed. *Ecstatic Confessions*. Collected and Introduced by Martin Buber. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. xxxv + 160 pp., \$16.95.
- Rosenzweig, Franz. *The Star of Redemption*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Press, 1985. xviii + 445 pp., \$12.95 (paper).
- Wyschogrod, Edith. *Spirit in Ashes. Hegel, Heidegger and Man-Made Mass Death*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. xvi + 247 pp., \$22.50.

Poetry

- Caspi, Misha'el Maswari, tr. *Daughters of Yemen*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985. xv + 264 pp.

Religion

- Buber, Martin. *The Prophetic Faith*. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1985. 246 pp., \$6.95 (paper).
- Kurzweil, Zvi. *The Modern Impulse of Traditional Judaism*. Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV, 1985. xiv + 156 pp., \$12.95.
- Libowitz, Richard. *Mordecai M. Kaplan and the Development of Reconstructionism*. Studies in American Religion, Vol. 9. New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 266 pp.
- Lincoln, Bruce, ed. *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 311 pp., \$27.50.
- Siegel, Seymour and Elliot Gertel, eds. *God In the Teachings of Conservative Judaism*. Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV, 1985. 278 pp., \$20.
- Steinsaltz, Adin. *The Thirteen Petalled Rose*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985. 181 pp., \$6.95 (paper).
- Umansky, Ellen M. *Lily Montagu, Sermons, Addresses, Letters and Prayers*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985. xvi + 412 pp.
- Yadin, Yigal. *The Temple Scroll*. Hidden Law of the Dead Sea Sect. New York: Random House, 1985. 261 pp., \$24.95.

Midrash and Literature

edited by
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Sanford Budick

In this pioneering book a distinguished group of critics consider the nature of midrash and its influence throughout Western literature and theology. They discuss how our understanding of literature can benefit from the theoretical assumptions exhibited by midrash, giving attention not only to rabbinic midrash but to the midrashic aspects of the Bible itself, kabbalah, Christian hermeneutics, Milton, the novel, English Romanticism, Kafka, Borges, Agnon, and Celan. An important guide for scholars in Judaica and in the humanities. \$28.50

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